



At dawn on the 6th
In June the Allied
infantrymen of the
'first wave' try to come
ashore. The fiercest
fighting developed in
the hours that followed
at 'Omaha Beach',
although the shore
batteries (eg the HKB
Pointe du Hoc) did not
fire.

12:00 p.m. the battle report of the US 5th Corps had said that the Allied assault units were in disarray, and by midday the tragedy was approaching a new climax. It went so far that the landing craft of the following waves were circling senselessly up and down off the coast and did not dare to go ashore. The race for the Allies seemed practically lost.

In the few places where the Americans could gain a foothold, the 916th Grenadier Regiment had counterattacked, and

all that was missing was a final counterattack to finally drive the Americans off the beach or capture what was left. The Germans had already provided reserve forces for this purpose.

Suddenly an order from the staff of the 84th German Corps took the reserve forces who were to lead this last thrust out of the front and sent them to other sections of the coast. The reason given for this fateful wrong decision on the part of the German side is that the staff of the 84th Corps received a hasty report that the enemy had been 'thrown'. The true background of this measure has never been satisfactorily clarified.

At the same time, the German troops on the beach had to realize that the coastal artillery's own defensive fire, which had hitherto affected the American landings so badly, was gradually dwindling. In fact, the Germans were now running low on ammunition, and when the next wave of Allied landing craft finally ventured onto the beach, German coastal artillery could only respond with single fire. When the Allies realized this, the other landing craft also ventured back onto the beach to unload their cargo. The crisis had passed its peak.

1 Paul CARELL, *they are coming! Invasion 1944*, Ullstein, Berlin 1997, p. 115 ff.

In fact, ten days before the invasion, more than half the ammunition stocks of all the shore batteries had been removed by higher orders and taken to distant camps at St. Lô. As it was said, in safe ammunition arsenals! When the landing came, the wrong calibers were often delivered with "organizational precision". Other participants in the war reported so-called "black cases" in subsequent deliveries, especially with the 8.8 cm guns, i.e. ammunition that rendered the guns unusable after the first shot.² But it wasn't just about the ones Artillery ammunition taken from forward positions. In fact, as soon as the

2 Volker GREMLER in an information to the author of May 24, 2006

landing began, the 1352nd Artillery Regiment of the 352nd Infantry Division was informed by the division's supply group that no replacement ammunition could be expected before June 9th. Even before that, the regiment had only received a basic set of ammunition.

3 David C. ISBY, *The German Army at D-Day*, Greenhill 2004, pp. 198, 200 and 202 f.

Normal would have been 4 to 6. Thus the heavy barrage of divisional artillery planned for the night of June 6/7 had to be canceled.³ It was repeatedly shown that, in addition to decisive interventions by senior staff officers, especially at the German level

Systemic mistakes occurred on the supply side, which can only be explained with targeted sabotage.

Today's historical works agree that a crucial mistake made by the German defense against the invasion in June 1944 was the "insufficient massive use of our own artillery". In addition to the 352nd Infantry Division, this also affected all other units on June 6, 1944. The numerous intact beach-range artillery pieces had to be blown up by the next day after they had used up their last shells.

Lieutenant Colonel Fritz ZIEGELMANN of the 352nd Infantry Division blamed this on "poor planning" by the German high command in the post-war period. Should he have spoken of deliberate planning that cost his division's blood?

At the end of June, of the 15,000 men that the 352nd Infantry Division had at its disposal on June 6, only 180 were still with its troops. The rest were dead, wounded, captured, or missing.

Proof of how it could have been

There are indeed indications of what might have happened if a large part of the German shore batteries had not been hampered in counter-invasion efforts due to a lack of ammunition, troop withdrawals, non-delivery of fire control equipment, etc

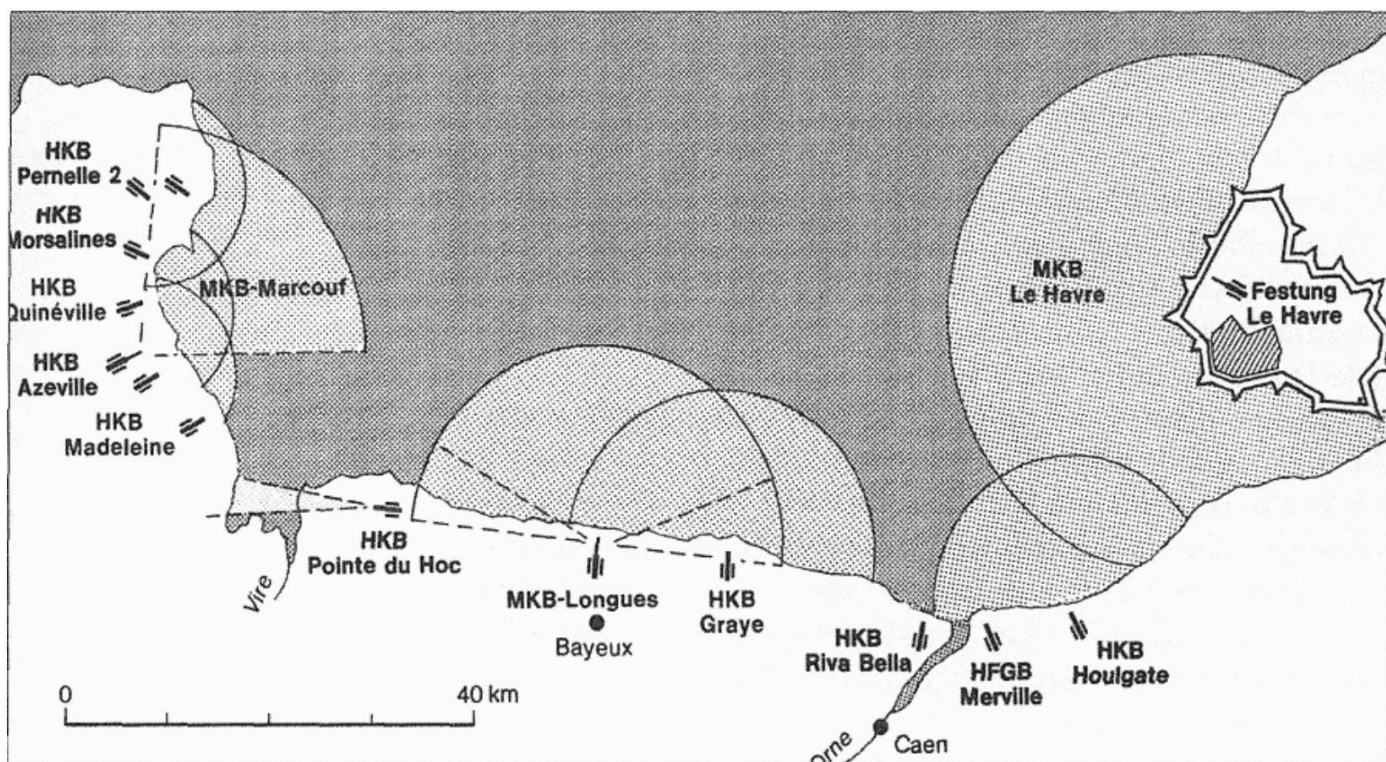
When the Allies landed, the Houlgate coastal battery was still under construction. It was 30 kilometers east of the Orne estuary, about 3 kilometers inland on a high plateau above the seaside resort of tes Houlgate. It was armed with six French 15.5 cm model 1916 guns, which had a range of 15 kilometers.

The HKB ›Houlgate‹ was well known to the Allies from photographs taken by the Resistance. Nevertheless, this battery survived the massed Allied bombing raids and shelling with heavy ship artillery and threatened the British sector beach ›Sword‹ and the Orne estuary until mid-August 1944.

The disruptive fire from the HKB ›Houlgate‹ was so annoying that on July 13 General EISENHOWER had to write: "... after the shelling several

1 After the invasion, infantry protection was withdrawn from many bunkered coastal batteries in Normandy, so that the gunners had to take on their own defense and could no longer shoot at sea targets. The soft

As in the case of the 24 cm battery "Marcouf", the current fire control units had long since been dispatched from Reich territory by rail, but "were left lying around".



Location of the Army Coastal Batteries (HKB) and the Navy Coastal Batteries (MKB) in the Normandy sector. From: Janusz PIEKALKIEWICZ, *Invasion. France 1944*, Southwest, Munich 1979.

Mal had caused interruptions in the unloading, on 13.

Finally ordered to stop all eradication operations in this coastal sector on July 12. This shows how effective a single coastal battery could be against landings, even armed with antiquated guns dating back to the First World War.

It was not until August 22, 1944, after the closure of the Falaise pocket, that Dutch troops from the 'Prinses Irene' brigade captured HKB 'Houlgate'. That morning she had fired a few shots. The German gunners even managed to get fuel for their tractors and took two intact wheeled guns with them. When Allied artillery officers inspected the site of the battery that evening, they could not understand that it was still firing. Around 3,650 tons of bombs and over 1,000 heavy artillery shells up to a caliber of 40.6 cm had fallen on the battery area.

This battery, equipped with antiquated guns, is an example of what the Atlantic Wall coastal batteries could have done under more favorable conditions. Even though the Normandy coast was poorly artillerized compared to the Pas-de-Calais, the Allies were fortunate that what they called "strange German errors" helped eliminate this threat.

Atlantic Wall without anti-aircraft protection. Where was the flak on June 6?

Only relatively few German anti-aircraft guns stood in the way of the total Allied air superiority in the first three days after the landing. These were mainly permanently installed old captured anti-aircraft guns in the bunkers of the Atlantic Wall as well as the predominantly light anti-aircraft guns assigned to the Army and SS units for immediate air protection. Even if they sometimes achieved considerable success in shooting, they could only cause pinpricks at most.

The majority of the German troops remained completely at the mercy of the Allied fighter-bombers. It didn't have to be like this:

After the experiences in the late phase of the African campaign as well as after the lessons from the Italian campaign, it was clear to the German high command what to expect after a landing from the Allied air forces. Thus, in the spring of 1944, the III. Flak corps under Lieutenant General Wolfgang PICKERT set up as the operational reserve of the III Air Fleet for cooperation with the Panzer Group West. It had four motorized anti-aircraft assault regiments (1/4) and was well equipped in terms of personnel and material with its 27 8.8 cm anti-aircraft batteries (including three with the modern 8.8 cm Flak 41) and 26 light/medium batteries.¹ Through its full engine could intervene at any time at focal points. A formidable force capable of providing anti-aircraft, artillery and anti-tank mainstays with its heavy firepower, and providing the attack and defense backbone of anti-invasion forces. But hardly than the III. Once Flak Corps was deployed, the same strange quarrels broke out that other units had to endure in anticipation of the Normandy invasion. When the reports from the OKW underlined the importance of Normandy as a probable landing area, Field Marshal ROMMEL demanded that the III. Anti-aircraft corps to the Calvados coast. Reich Marshal GÖRING is said to have rejected ROMMEL's demand. Whether this is true or whether GÖRING's name (or signature?) was only put forward to mark the III. Keeping anti-aircraft corps away from Normandy can no longer be decided today.^{2, 3}

¹ KOCH, *Flak, The history of the German anti-aircraft artillery*, Podzun-Pallas, Wölfersheim Berstadt 1965, pp. 133, 139 ff., 443, and 663.

² Janusz PIEKALKIEWICZ, *Invasion. France 1944*, Southwest, Munich, p.106

³ Paul CARRELL, *you are coming. The invasion of 1944*, Ullstein, Berlin 1979, pp. 153-156.

The III. After ROMMEL's intervention, Flakkorps had at least been assigned the task of immediately going to the beachhead with all Flak forces in the event of a landing on the Normandy coast. For this purpose, the anti-aircraft corps was relocated to the Paris area.

Oddly enough, the III. Anti-aircraft corps transferred a few days before the invasion to "union exercises" on both sides of the Somme. His command post was south of Amiens. To this day, it is not known who was responsible for this "relocation" further away from the invasion area.

When the invasion on 5./6. June 1944, nobody felt it necessary to alert this important key unit. Even on the morning of June 6, 1944, General PICKERT had not received any news of the landings. He went on an inspection trip.

It was only when he returned in the afternoon that he found the first reports, but here too with the caveat (by whom?) that it was not yet clear whether it was a question of the great invasion. The same 'delay/fog tactic' over and over again. General PICKERT immediately drove to Paris to get clarification. On his own initiative, on the afternoon of June 6, he finally got his detachments to march to the Caen area. The motorized anti-aircraft units now made forced marches to the invasion coast, marching day and night.

Due to the relocation, the detachments had to cover up to 400 kilometers and therefore mostly did not arrive in the operational area west of Caen until the evening of June 8th.

They had suffered significant losses in personnel and material from the Allied Air Forces. General PICKERT reported on the destruction of 20 anti-aircraft guns, 110 tractors and trucks, and 100 motorcycles and cars. However, the III. Flak corps took down 35 aircraft.

Until its destruction in the Falaise Pocket in August 1944, the III. Flakkorps one of the mainstays of the western German army. It was able to report 462 certain aircraft downs and over 100 tanks destroyed. Its anti-aircraft guns were not only used for anti-aircraft and anti-tank defense, but also included in the firing plans of the army artillery. The army artillery could not get nearly as many shells on target as the anti-aircraft guns with the same number of barrels in the same period of time.

By the time HL Flak Corps arrived at the front, the Atlantic Wall had already been breached and Allied bridgeheads were established.

What would have happened if the 2 cm quadruple anti-aircraft guns, 3.8 cm anti-aircraft guns and 10.5 cm anti-aircraft guns of the III. Flakkorps would have been at the front on June 6, 1944? Without General PICKERT's own initiative, the anti-aircraft guns, which are so important for repelling the invasion, would have arrived even later

1 According to American reports, 113 Allied

aircraft were shot down on the day of the invasion, most of them by flak.

(Samuel W. MITCHAM Jr., *The Desert Fox in Normandy*

(Cooper Square, 2001), p. 71.)

It is hardly credible that the relocation and failure to alert the III. Flakkorps can only be attributed to a lack of coordination in the transmission of messages between the high staffs. In view of a large number of similar cases, it must rather be concluded that this 'delaying and forgetting' was a method that high German authorities had planned long in advance.

In this case, it meant that the Atlantic Wall was almost defenseless against the Allied bombs.

Dept. 4: Where was the German counterattack against the bridgeheads?

When SS-Standartenführer Kurt MEYER studied the map of the invasion area at midnight on June 6, 1944, he exclaimed: "Small fish - we will throw them back into the sea in the morning!"¹

Since the German high command did not want to commit to an exact location of the attack, the Atlantic Wall was only held by relatively weak unmotorized units. In the hinterland, however, there were sufficient armored formations that were supposed to intervene in threatened places in the event of a landing in order to drive the invaders away again.

1 Michael REYNOLDS,
An opponent like steel,
Pour le Mérite, Selent
2004, p. 62.

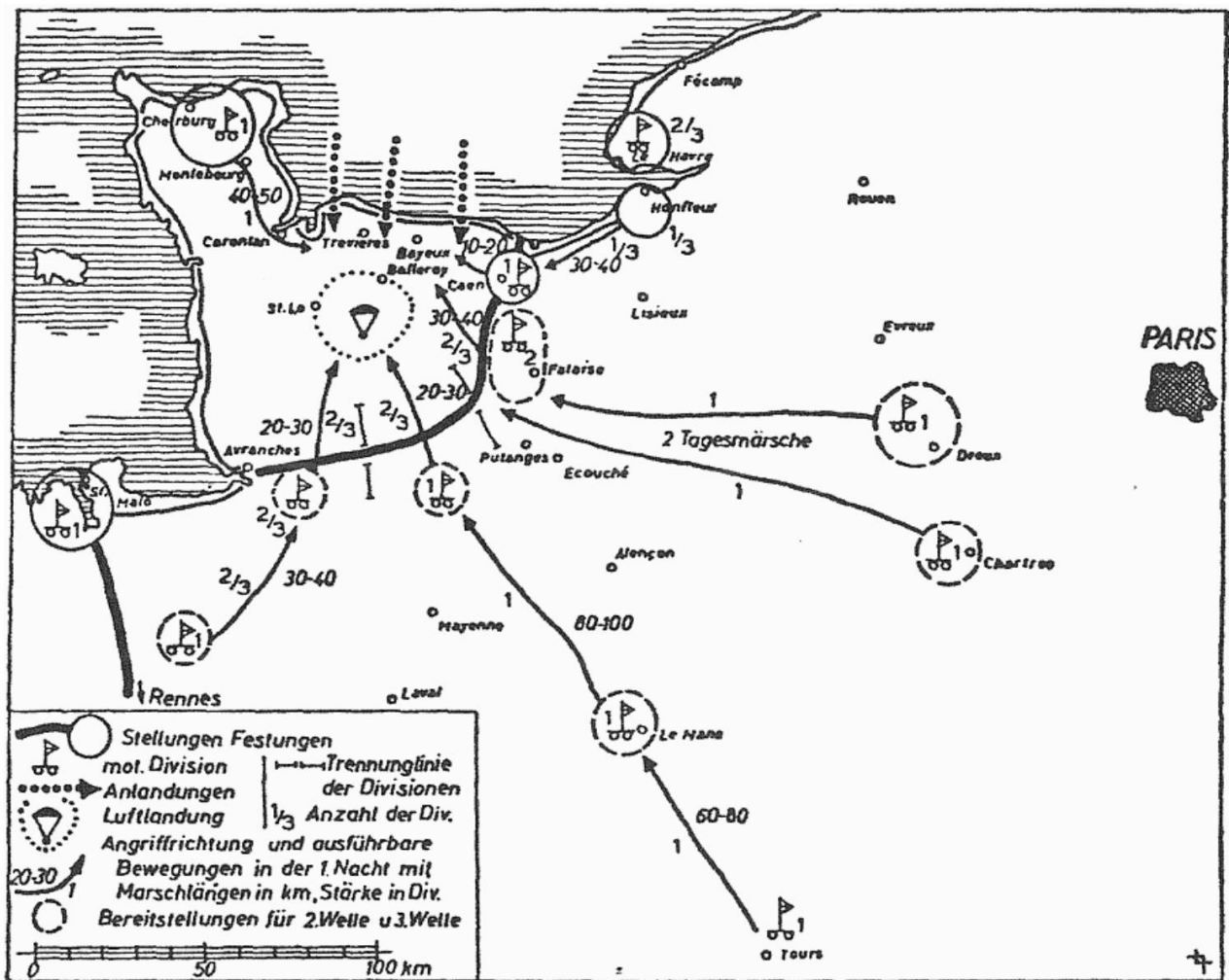
German tanks: threat to the invasion force

Three German armored divisions were a short distance from the Normandy beaches on the day of the landing. The Panzer Lehr Division in Le Mans was the furthest away, but if the alarm had been given in good time at midnight, it too could have reached the landing beaches with its main force on the first day of the invasion.

Two other armored divisions were still closer in the Caen area and south-east of it at Dreux: the 21st Panzer Division and the 12th Panzer Division. SS Panzer Division. As I said, both could have thrown back the landed enemy, namely the English and Canadians in their bridgeheads 'Gold', 'Juno' and 'Sword', back into the sea before dawn.

In fact, all three divisions were destroyed on the night of the invasion alerted in time. But what followed is downright unbelievable.

Strange manipulations had already taken place in the run-up to the landing when the Panzer Lehr Division was being set up: The



The ideal set-up for immediate defensive measures was available! This sketch by Field Marshal KESSEL RING (*Gedanken zum Zweite WW*, Bublies, Schnellbach 2000, p. 148 ff.) proves that sufficient German troops were ready to be brought into the invasion area during the night of June 5/6, 1944. It would not even have been necessary to resort to the 15th Army as a large security reserve in the Pas-de-Calais.

1 General Walter WARLIMONT from the Wehrmacht Operations Staff at the OKW was also unable to assert himself against 'superior officers at the OKW' when he wanted to change this catastrophic situation (Hrowe H. SAUNDERS, *Der verratene Sieg*, Druffel, Leoni 1984, p. 136).

slowest tanks had to be placed furthest behind in an advance towards the coast. Despite the numerous protests by General Fritz BAYERLEIN, the OKW categorically forbade him from repositioning parts of his division.¹ It was as if unknown forces there were doing nothing to protect the division that would have been able to do it alone had it arrived at the landing beaches in time, to drive the invaders back into the sea, to keep them away from the enemy for as long as possible. To make this even more difficult, the army's only fully armored large-scale combat division had been deployed 150 kilometers from the coast.

What obscure role did the Wehrmacht High Command play in preventing an earlier counterstrike?

Today it is common knowledge that the OKW (High Command of the Wehrmacht) in the Führer Headquarters prevented the tank reserves from being released in good time against the Allied invasion troops on June 6, 1944. For far too long it had been assumed there that the Normandy invasion was a 'fake landing' followed by the main landing at the Pas-de-Calais. One should therefore not fritter away one's reserves on such a trivial matter.

It was about the Panzer Lehr Division, which was subordinate to the OKW, and the 12th SS Panzer Division 'Hitlerjugend'. Both of these powerful large units could not be used without the permission of the OKW.

In fact, their official release by Adolf HITLER was much too late, at around 3:30 p.m. on June 6th. As it stands, high-ranking traitors in the OKW and in Army Group B in France also played a decisive part in this crucial delay.

If everything had gone the right way, nothing should have gone wrong here either.

The Fuhrer Headquarters was, of course, fully informed of the first findings about the Allied landing that was looming on the night of June 6, 1944, and at 2:30 a.m. OKW General WARLIMONT, Field Marshal JODL's deputy, telephoned General's command post BAYERLEIN, the commander of the Panzer-Lehrdivision, and informed him: "The Panzer-Lehrdivision is to be put on the alert for the advance towards Caen. They will receive further orders from Army Group B." The commander of the 12th SS Panzer Division 'Hitlerjugend', Brigadier WITT, himself alerted his formations after the first reports of enemy airborne landings had come in. It is not known whether he had also been called from the Fuhrer's headquarters beforehand. At 4:00 sharp on June 6, 1944, his 12th SS Panzer Division was ready to march.¹ But nothing happened! What happened?

As early as 5:00 a.m. on D-Day, more than two hours before the British landings began, Field Marshal VON RUND STEDT ordered the 12th SS Panzer Division to advance behind the 711th Infantry Division and also alerted the Panzer Lehr Division to get ready for immediate action. To wah the military form



Walter WARLIMONT
(1894-1971) was
deputy to Alfred JODL
as general of artillery in
the Wehrmacht
command staff.

**1 Not notified
at all were the 1.**
SS Panzer Division Leib
Standarte Adolf Hitler'
and the 17th SS
Panzergrenadier
Division 'Götz von Berlichinge

ren, he sent a formal request for approval to the OKW about twenty minutes later.

At 7:00 a.m. General Walter WARLIMONT from the Führer Headquarters in Rastenburg telephoned his boss in his temporary headquarters near the Obersalzberg in Berchtesgaden and informed the OKW Operations Officer there about RUNDSTEDT's requirements Battle of Normandy: When JODL's reply came, it said: "According to the reports I received, it could just be a diversionary attack... West Group has enough reserves... I don't think that now is the time to release the OKW reserves.«

General WARLIMONT was shocked by Field Marshal JODL 's refusal to release the tanks. But he had to pass these overriding orders on to RUNDSTEDT's chief of staff, General Günther BLUMENTRITT . As early as 7:30 a.m., "shock and incredulity" prevailed in the High Command of OB West. Field Marshal VON RUNDSTEDT told te.1, 2 ROMMELS Chief of Staff, General Hans

SPEIDEL, admits in his book *Invasion 1944* that the OKW kept calling Army Group B during the night and in the morning to ask for information about the situation. Apparently , General SPEIDEL tried successfully to dissuade the OKW from quickly releasing its reserves.³ He wrote: "In the first few hours, issuing operational instructions was out of the question as long as there were no reports and the reconnaissance organs sent everywhere immediately provided clarity had brought. You had to have the nerve to wait. Constant calls from the High Command of the Wehrmacht and the Commander-in-Chief West testify to the nervousness at the highest levels. Generaloberst JODL was repeatedly informed about the situation by the Chief of the General Staff (i.e. Gen. SPEIDEL – author's note) .

Boss JODL persuaded to wait. It was all or nothing!

It was more difficult for EISENHOWER's helpers with the Commander-in-Chief West. VON RUNDSTEDT and his men, who, like SPEIDEL , had enough reports coming in directly from the clearly looming invasion, did not let themselves be lulled by anyone and actually dared to say at 4.10 a.m. on June 6 "Increased willingness to march for tank groups - West Command with 12th SS Panzer Division, Panzer Lehr Division and 17th SS Panzergrenadier Division.

1 Paul CARELL, *they are coming! The invasion of 1944*, Ullstein, Berlin 1'1997, p. 101-152.

2 Samuel W. MITCHAM jr., *The Desert Fox in Normandy*, Cooper Square 2001, p.so.

3 Hans SPEIDEL, *Invasion 1944*, Rainer Wunderlich, Tübingen 51949, p. 99.

Against this danger for the still young Allied landing had to be so to be intervened. And the danger was averted!

The determination with which a possible German counterattack on June 6 was prevented by certain people in the OKW speaks volumes. Major General Baron Horst VON BUTTLAR-BRANDENFELS from the Army Operations Staff was particularly prominent on the part of the OKW. He yelled over the phone at VON RUNDSTEDT's operations chief, Colonel Bodo ZIMMEREMANN : 'You had no right to alert the Panzer troops without our prior permission (the troops were not even allowed to be alerted - editor's note). You must stop the tanks immediately.' Colonel ZIMMER-MANN tried to argue, but he was only ordered: 'Do as you are told,' VON BUTTLAR-BRANDENFELS concluded his call.

So the German tanks were stopped. Strangely enough, the events in connection with the prevented release of the German tank reserves and RUNDSTEDT's actions on June 6, 1944 can only be described incompletely today, since numerous war diaries about this period have been lost. Inexperienced people are welcome to continue to believe in coincidence.¹

The only one who could now release the troops was Adolf HITLER himself. Nevertheless, according to popular opinion, HITLER's environment did not react, and only when General EISENHOWER had a press report about the Allied landing in Normandy circulated at 9:33 a.m. did Lieutenant General Rudolf SCHMUNDT, ROMMEL's only friend in the Führer 's headquarters, decide to wake HITLER up.

David IRVING rightly wrote² that it was a tragedy for the Germans that Field Marshal ROMMEL was not at his headquarters on the day of the invasion, SPEIDEL had only telephoned him at Herrlingen near Ulm at about 10:15. With his temperament - and his

¹ The same 'pattern' reappears in the decisive Russian offensive from the Baranov bridgehead on January 12, 1945. Due to a 'leadership failure', two tank divisions deployed at the right place on the attacking front were not allowed to be deployed without HITLER's direct approval and were thus overrun when the defensive front collapsed, since HITLER's order never came through. Otherwise STALIN's major offensive to relieve the Western Allies in the Ardennes would have been in grave danger. Afterwards it turned out that HITLER had no knowledge of the existence of this "Führererbe-Rehl"! The information comes from the adjutant of Grand Admiral DÖNITZ, W. LÜDDE NEURATH (*Doenitz government*).

Bublies, Schnellbach 1999, p. 21).

² David IRVING, *Battle for Europe. With the courage of desperation against the invasion*, DSZ, Munich 2004, p. 156.

At that time there were still good relations with HITLER - the quick release of the OKW Panzer Divisions was certainly achieved quickly. ROMMEL later wrote to his wife: "If they had listened to me, we would have lined up with three armored divisions on the first evening and would probably have repulsed the attack."

According to the sensational new Russian secret documents of the *book Hitler*¹ this well-known process is now in question. After that, HITLER's valet Heinz LINGE woke the Fuhrer early in the morning on June 6, 1944, because General JODL urgently wanted him on the phone to tell him the news of the start of the invasion.

Just half an hour later, KEITEL and JODL were already at the Berghof, where a relieved HITLER greeted them with the words that the Anglo-Americans had finally landed, "where we expected them to be." JODL reported to HITLER that the landing troops had already been repelled in many places and that the enemy had not succeeded in launching a surprise attack.

What a mistake! How (or better by whom) did these false reports by JODL come about?

It's also unclear why it took so long for the Release of the OKW Panzer Divisions in Normandy arrived.

Considering the possibility that HITLER had existed since the early 6th June was informed about the beginning of the landing, he could and should have released the armored divisions much earlier than is assumed today. The question then becomes all the more interesting as to what happened in the OKW for hours afterwards.

When HITLER's release order finally arrived at the Normandy front at 3:30 p.m., the first critical moment of weakness of the landed seasick invasion troops had already passed. A coordinated rapid counter-attack by the OKW reserve tanks, which had been alerted in the early hours of the morning and have since been condemned to inactivity, would still have the barely consolidated Allies

can dent bridgeheads.

Push to the coast: the 21st Panzer Division went it alone

How was it that the weakest of the German armored divisions was the only one to advance to the beaches on the day of the invasion, disrupting the English landing?²⁻⁴

The 21st Panzer Division, although an OKW reserve, was subordinated to the 716th Infantry Division, which in turn belonged to Army Group B, in the event of an attack in Normandy.

¹ Henrik EBERLE and Matthias UHL, *Das Buch Hitler*, Gustav Lübke, Bergisch Gladbach 2005, p. 263 ff.

² Samuel W. MITCHAM Jr., *The Desert Fox in Normandy* (Cooper Square 2001), pp. 57 & 83-87.

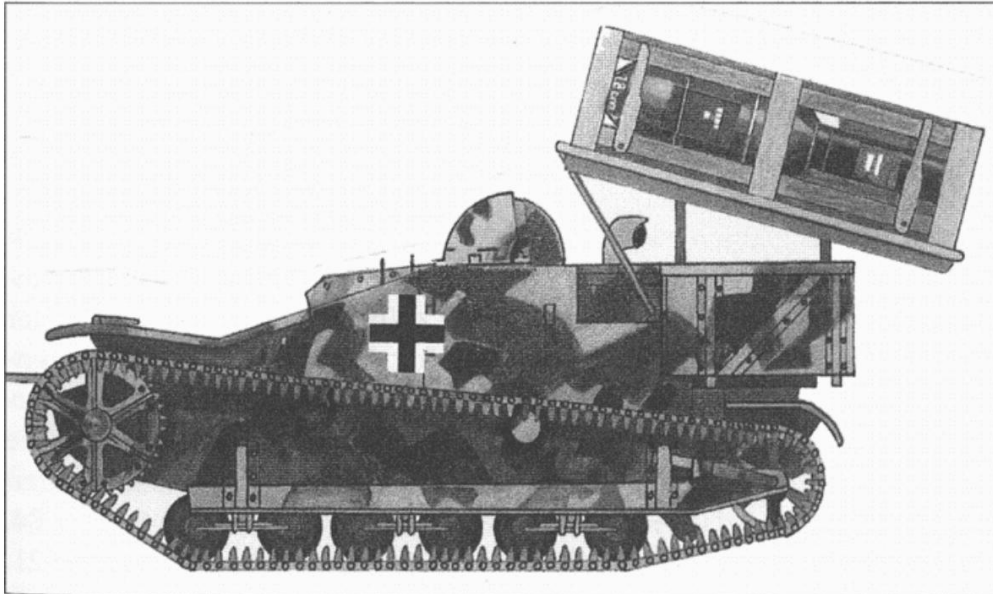
³ Paul CARELL, *they are coming! The invasion of 1944*, Ullstein, Berlin 1997, pp. 134-141.

⁴ Helmut RITGEN, *Western Front 1944*, Motorbuch, Stuttgart 2004, p. 58 ff.

The other reserves of Army Group B were the 2nd and 116th armored division. But, as will be explained later, there was something special about these two divisions.

Since the early hours of June 6, 1944, General MARCKS, the commander of the 84th Corps, had been constantly on the phone with the 7th Army (DOLLMANN), Army Group B (SPEIDEL) and also General JODL at the Fuhrer's Headquarters to request clearance of the 21st Panzer Division.

Raised in France in 1943 by Lieutenant General FEUCHTINGER, the 21st Panzer Division was the weakest armored unit among the German reserve forces. It was classified as »unsuitable for the eastern theater of war« because it was mostly equipped with older German material (Panzerkampfwagen IV with short 7.5 cm L/24 guns) and without modern sights, as well as captured French tanks, some of which were not yet once had radio equipment. However, due to some special artillery weapons that the division had invented itself and had manufactured in France, it was the German division with the heaviest calibers in terms of artillery. Their second strength were some assault guns of German Her



June 6, 1944: Renault UE with 28 cm explosive rockets. The 21st Armored Division was to throw the British back with improvised solutions such as these outdated pre-war French ammunition tractors, on which the dreaded 'Fog Launcher' rockets had been mounted. They came to the beach.

Position and 7.5cm long-barreled self-propelled guns mounted on French tank chassis. The 21st was the only armored division only 30 kilometers from Caen - a stone's throw under normal conditions.

On the night of the invasion, when the first news of a possible landing came in, Division Commander General FEUCHTINGER was visiting a nightclub in Paris and drove back to his unit as quickly as possible. At 1:20 a.m. on the night of June 6, 1944, General RICHTER, the commander of the 716th Infantry Division, ordered General FEUCHTINGER by telephone to attack and destroy the airborne enemy forces east of the Orne. But General FEUCHTINGER had an older order: No action without the permission of Army Group B, which commanded the 21st Panzer Division, and although the Panzer and Grenadier Regiments of the 21st Panzer Division were ready to march, this order never came. General SPEIDEL, Chief of Staff of Army Group ROMMEL, refused clearance! In the post-war period, General SPEIDEL maintained that there had been a general order to intervene immediately with all forces in the event of an airborne landing. But this order was not known to anyone in the division!

It was not until around 6:30 a.m. on June 6, 1944, six hours after the start of the Normandy invasion, that the old Panzer IVs of the 2nd Department of the 22nd Armored Regiment of the 21st Armored Division were used against the Allied paratroopers. They had not yet fired a shot at the English paras (paratroopers) east of the Orne when orders came from Army Group B for the unit to turn back.

1 David IRVING, *Schlacht um Europa*, DSZ, Munich 2004, p. 107.

What had happened?1 Field Marshal ROMMEL stopped briefly in Reims at around 4:55 p.m. on his way to France to get an update on the situation at his headquarters in La Roche-Guyon. When he asked SPEIDEL : "How far is our counterattack?" SPEIDEL replied that the 21st Panzer Division was expecting further reinforcements. ROMMEL ordered in a sharp tone : "Have the division attack immediately, without considering further reinforcements!" SPEIDEL had to submit to his boss. The 84th Corps had meanwhile received the power of disposal over the 21st Panzer Division from the OKW, and General MARCKS , unlike General SPEIDEL , did not believe in using the tanks against the British airborne landings, but ordered them to go where it was really necessary: against the British beachhead. This happened eight hours after landing, at least six hours late! When approaching in daylight, 50 tanks had already been lost to fighter-bombers.

98 German and former French tanks now rolled under the command of General MARCKS, the commander of the 84.

Corps, against the English bridgehead. Standing in his open BMW, General MARCKS personally led the counterattack. The German armored counter-attack went right into the gap between the British sectors Juno and Sword, which had not yet been able to join. The first battalion of Panzergrenadier Regiment 192 succeeded with 6 tanks in advancing to the coast and cutting through a corridor. If the Germans managed to quickly fill this corridor with more tanks and artillery forces, it could mean the end of the British beachhead. At 19:00 the soldiers of the 21st Armored Division had reached the coast at Lion-sur Mer. They relieved the last strongholds of the 716th Infantry Division, whose crews had survived in buried trenches and half-shot bunkers. Everything looked very much like the second major crisis for the Allies that day, only this time it was not the Americans (Bloody Omaha) that were threatened, but the English. Three kilometers of beach were in German hands! But the German tanks could not do the infantry

follow. Pinned down by the naval artillery of the Allied fleets and handicapped by their technically obsolete armored vehicles, the GOTTBERG and VIERZIG tank companies were unable to assert themselves and had to go on the defensive. The British Field Marshal MONTGOMERY threw his reserves into the breach, and to this day it is disputed whether the 250 gliders and tow planes flying to the same area to ward off the German advance were to be used as a last resort in the rear of the 21st Armored Division or only "accidentally". flew by. Without supplies and with less and less ammunition, the advanced parts of the 21.

Panzer Division was in increasing distress, and in view of the threat of British airborne landings, General FEUCHTINGER decided to withdraw from the beach around 19:00. A decision that later brought him bitter criticism from the German side. He was accused of cowardice.

The English bridgehead ›Sword‹ was saved. While the 21st Panzer Division fought its way back to its starting positions, the 1st Battalion of the 192nd Panzer Regiment remained in its positions on the beach and then switched to the Luftwaffe radar display ›Distel fink‹, which remained solid as a rock for several days to come could claim until June 17th. Until then, Goldfinch had been providing the most accurate information about what was happening on the invasion beach over the phone.

But what use was it for the overall situation if not even HITLER believed that the main landing took place here? It is unclear whether the reports from ›Distelfink‹ were forwarded to the OKW at all.

Nevertheless, the deployment of the 21st Panzer Division was of the greatest importance for the further course of the landing operation, because its deployment on June 6, 1944 delayed the Allied schedule so much that it could not be made up for by the end of the Battle of Normandy.

What would have happened if the 21st Panzer Division had moved in six hours earlier and perhaps had the support of the other two OKW Panzer Divisions?

Here, too, General SPEIDEL's actions saved the Allied landing forces from a serious crisis. The Spanish WWII super spy Alcazar DE VELASCO characteristically said in a post-war interview about General SPEIDEL : "Ese es el que perdimos la guerra." (That's the one we lost the war for!) DE VELASCO was a during WWII Top nuclear spy of the Third Reich and was significantly involved in the flight of leading figures of the Third Reich from Europe to South America in the first post-war period.

June 6, 1944, 3:30 p.m. a Waffen-SS colonel prevented a further attempt at delay

Irrespective of what was happening around the 21st Panzer Division, the drama of the tanks, which were subordinated to the OKW, entered the next round.

At 2:00 p.m. the 1st SS Panzer Corps was assigned to Army Group B by SS Obergruppenfuhrer Sepp DIETRICH ROMMEL . According to OKW instructions, however, the 1st SS Panzer Division "Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler" was to remain in Belgium as a strategic reserve.

Between 2:30 and 3:00 p.m. the OKW informed the Commander-in-Chief West that both the Hitler Youth Division and the Panzer Lehr Division had been cleared for use by the 7th Army, and at 3:07 p.m. the Commander-in-Chief announced West informed Army Group B that DIETRICH's I. SS Panzer Corps was also part of the 7. Army should be subordinated.

Now there was a further attempt at delay: According to his efficient chief of staff, Fritz KRAEMER , DIETRICH was to report in person to the headquarters of the 7th Army near Le Mans

report to discuss the situation with Generaloberst DOLLMANN and to receive orders. The expected consequence of this: further delays in the deployment of the OKW Panzer Divisions, which had already been approved.

But Chief of Staff KRAEMER smelled the fuse! His reply was that it was far too dangerous for his commander to fly a light Fieseler Storch and that it would take too much time by road. Instead, he asked for telephone orders that would later be confirmed in writing. Now the "retarders" had to give in: DIETRICH received the order from SPEIDEL that the 12.

SS Panzer Division was to move immediately to the area on either side of Evreux. The order was "to throw back into the sea and destroy the enemy who had broken through to the west next to the 21st Panzer Division". The Panzer Lehr Division was to win the Fleurs Vire area. At 4:00 p.m., SS General

DIETRICH met with Division Commander WITT.^{1,2} The delay in ordering the deployment of the armored reserves was over, but had caused irreparable damage to the defense.

1 FRITZ KRAEMER, *I. SS Panzer Corps in the West*, MS C 024, WM, AL 2727/1-2.

2 Michael REYNOLDS, *An opponent like steel*, Pour le Mérite, Selent 2004, p. 58.

OKW reserve: the betrayed divisions

On the day of the invasion, the 1st SS Panzer Corps with the 1st and 12th SS Panzer Divisions, together with the Panzer Lehr Division, belonged to the so-called OKW Reserve. In addition, there was the 17th SS Panzergrenadier Division stationed in Brittany.

General BAYERLEIN's armored training division, located 120 kilometers south-west of Paris, was alerted by General WARLIMONT from OK W at 2:30 a.m. It was to be put on alert for the advance towards Caen and to receive its further orders from Army Group B.^{3,4}

3 Paul CARELL, *they are coming! The invasion of 1944*, Ullstein, Berlin 171397, p. 142 and 1

At the time, the Panzer Lehr Division was probably one of the best equipped Panzer Divisions in the Third Reich. As the only such unit, it was 100 percent armored and had 260 armored fighting vehicles and 800 armored tracked vehicles. Their combat value was rated very highly by the German leadership. The inspector general of the German armored forces, Colonel General GUDERIAN, said to General BAYERLEIN during an exercise : "With this division alone they will throw the Anglo-Americans back into the sea. Your goal is not the coast, but the sea.«

4 Helmut RITGEN, *West front 1944*, Motorbuch Stuttgart 2004, pp. 47 and 60.

Apparently , General EISENHOWER's helpers in the OKW saw it the same way, because just a few days before the Allied landing, the Panzer Lehr Division had its best tank detachment, including its "Panther" and "King Tiger" companies, taken away from it on the orders of the OKW and immediately directed East Front loaded. This happened on June 4th.

To this day it has never been revealed which senior officers in the OKW were behind it. Their trail appears to have been successfully covered. The OKW suddenly showed how fast it could be: On the day of the invasion, parts of the Panther Battalion (I/Panzer Regiment 6) were already in Reich territory on the railways together with the "Königtigers" and the B IV remote-controlled explosive tanks of Funklenkkompagnie 316.

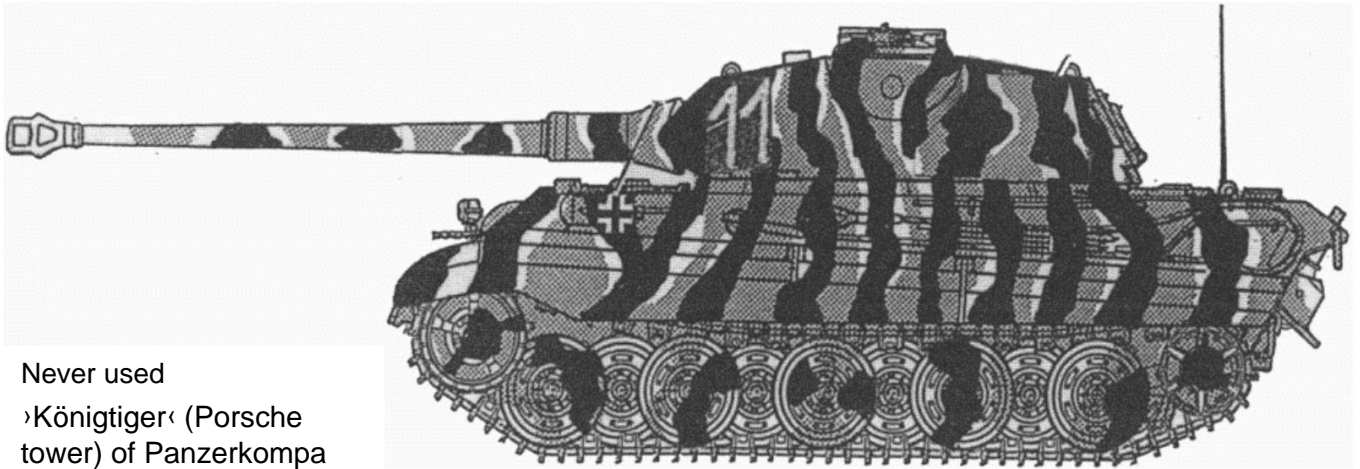
It gives food for thought that the aim of the Blitz transfer was not immediate combat action on the Eastern Front, but merely the formation of a new Panzer Battalion (FKL 302). [FKL = radio control]

The Panzer-Lehrdivision was mainly left with its old Panzer IV and infantry fighting vehicles to intervene on the first days of the invasion.

In battles on the beaches, the B IV radio controlled tanks of Fernlenkkompanie 316 could also have been used significantly against landings of the invading troops - if they had not been allowed to roll eastwards on railroad cars. In the fierce July battles that followed, their recovered vehicles proved what they could do. Too late!

A danger for the landing troops: Borgward BIV A remote control tank, Panzer Company (FKL) 316, hastily removed from France on June 4th.





Never used

›Königtiger‹ (Porsche tower) of Panzerkompanie (FKL) 316.

The B IVs were supposed to be remote-controlled by 'King Tiger' tanks. The heavy Panzerkampfwagen "Königtiger" were among the best tanks of the Second World War, their frontal armor could not be penetrated by any Allied defense weapon and they could put their opponents out of action at a distance of thousands of meters without them having any chance of defending themselves.

General BAYERLEIN reacted immediately to this strange weakening of his division. He stopped the transports on his own responsibility, the parts of the Panzer Battalion that had not yet been loaded were taken back, and whatever was already rolling into the eastbound wagons was ordered back. Nevertheless, it took five days before the missing de 'Panther' tank detachment could appear on the Normandy front.

The "Königtigers" of the Panzer Lehr Division were kept from use in France because of "mechanical susceptibilities" and had to be destroyed by the Germans themselves in August 1944 so that they did not fall into Allied hands. Sabotage at the manufacturer's plant was considered to be the reason for these 'mechanical problems' of the early 'King Tigers', which also appeared on the Eastern Front at the same time. The Panzer Lehr Division was not given many valuable hours by the OKW. The commanders and soldiers had to follow the reports from the landing front without being allowed to intervene.

When HITLER radioed the release of the OKW reserve to France at 2:30 p.m., two others followed

1 On July 11, 1944, the "Königtigers" of the 503rd Heavy Army Tank Battalion were deployed in Normandy for the first time, followed by the 1st Heavy Tank Battalion 502 in August. The "King Tigers" of FKL 3/6, which had been in France since June, did not fire a single live shot.

2 Tom JENTZ, Hilary DOCLE & Peter SARSON, *Kingtiger. Heavy Tank 1942-45*, Osprey 1993, p. 40 ff.

³ Egon SMALL & Volkmar KÜHN, *tiger. History of a legendary weapon 1942-45*, Motorbuch Stuttgart 1981, p. 189.

4 Markus JAUCITZ, *The German Remote Control Unit 1943-45*, Waffenarsenal Special Volume 12, Podzun-Pallas, Wolfersheim-Berstadt 1995, p. 27.

half an hour nothing. Now the General Staff of Army Group B once again showed that it had "strong nerves," as General SPEIDEL liked to put it in the post-war period, while the positions of the deserted defenders on the Atlantic Wall were being captured one by one by the invading troops.

At 5:00 p.m. Colonel-General Friedrich DOLLMANN, Commander-in-Chief of the 7th Army, finally gave the order for the Panzer Lehr Division to attack.

Now, after weakening and delaying, the next unpleasant surprise came for the best German armored division! Colonel-General DOLLMANN, who played an obscure role during the Allied landings in Normandy, not only gave General BAYERLEIN the order to advance in daylight, but also suggested a change in the planned advance routes. This would have led to even greater chaos with further loss of time. But General BAYERLEIN pushed through the original route plan.

Despite General BAYERLEIN's protests, the Panzer Lehr Division had to obey General DOLLMANN's orders and march in broad daylight to their headquarters in the Caen area. As might be expected, this was a death march with Allied fighter-bombers waiting everywhere.

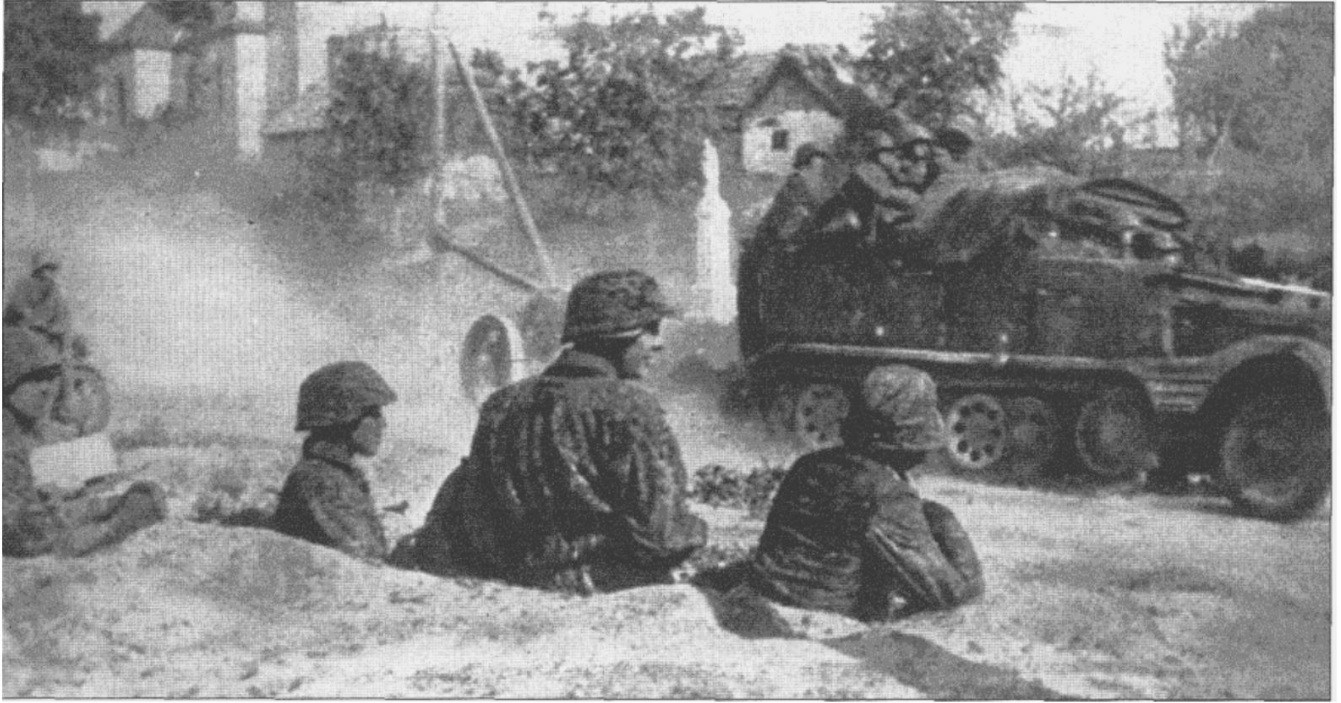
The columns of smoke from the burning vehicles marked the slow advance of BAYERLEIN's troops towards the coast for many kilometers. Nightfall brought some relief. Even BAYERLEIN narrowly escaped death when his commander's car was targeted by a fighter-bomber and burned out completely. The radio silence ordered by General DOLLMANN for the advance made things even more difficult for the Panzer Lehr Division, and General BAYERLEIN exasperatedly noted: "As if radio silence could stop the Allied fighter-bombers and reconnaissance aircraft from attacking us!" Again, doubts about the General's role DOLLMANNs up.

So it came about that the Panzer Lehr Division only arrived in their meeting room piece by piece, much too late and with great losses. Only after June 9, 1944 would it be able to intervene as a complete but already weakened task force.

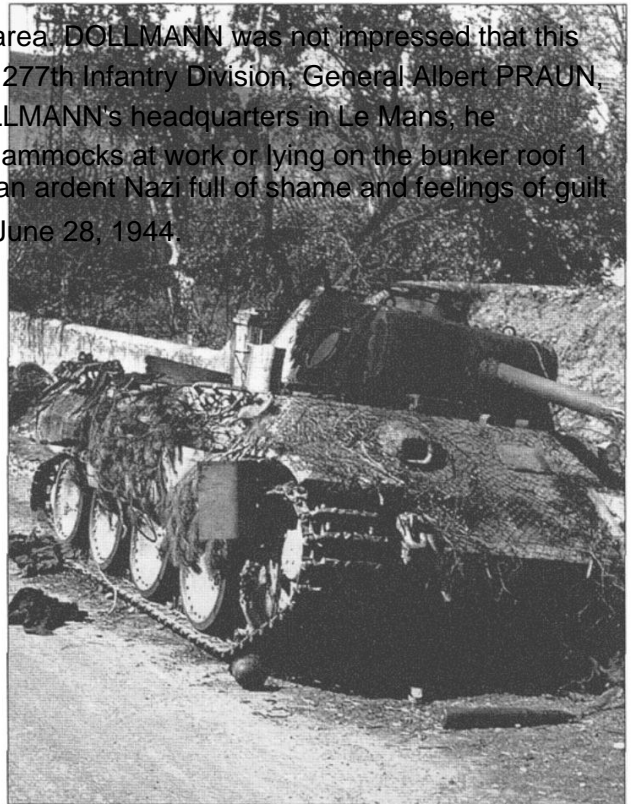
Exactly the opposite happened with other units called in for reinforcements. When the powerful, non-motorized 277th Infantry Division was to be moved quickly from southern France to the Normandy front, General Dollmann ordered the division, which had made rapid progress up to that point, to get off the railway in Angers



From top: Friedrich DOLL
MANN (1899-1944) and Fritz
BAYERLEIN.



Grenadiers of the 12th Panzer Division at a village entrance near Caen. The German countermeasures were simply too late. Below: Destroyed tank of the Panzer Lehr Division near Caen. to cover the and the rest of the route only by foot at night to the operational area. DOLLMANN was not impressed that this would take a full 14 days . When the commander of the 277th Infantry Division, General Albert PRAUN, had to accept these nonsensical orders at General DOLLMANN's headquarters in Le Mans, he experienced strange conditions there, such as lying in hammocks at work or lying on the bunker roof 1 Colonel- General DOLLMANN, who had changed from an ardent Nazi full of shame and feelings of guilt to an opponent of HITLER , later committed suicide on June 28, 1944.



1 Hella PRAUN (ed.), *Albert Praun. A German (soldier) life, 1894-1975*, Hella Praun, Munich 2004, p. 234.

South of the Loire near Poitiers, another part of the OKW reserve, the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division (›Götz von Berlichingen‹), was waiting far away for the landing.

Released to ROMMEL by the OKW on June 7th, it was to take until June 13th for the division to finally arrive in the ordered operational area in the western part of the Cotentin peninsula.

A veteran of ›Götz von Berlichingen‹ still clearly remembers that the French in Poitiers knew about the transfer order to Normandy even before the division did.² The 12th SS Panzer Division ›Hitlerjugend‹ also had “strange problems”, just in time to reach the intended area of operations.³ This excellently trained and modernly equipped SS division under Brigadeführer WITT was already ready to march at 4:00 a.m. on June 6, 1944. Their Panzergrenadier Regiment 25 was already scouting towards Caen.

² Statement by eyewitness ›Hagen‹ dated November 10, 2003 to the author.

³ Herbett WALTHER, *The 12th SS Panzer Division HJ*, Dörfner, Utting 2004, pp. 55-63.

Around. At 5:05 a.m. Field Marshal VON RUNDSTEDT put the Hitler Youth Division under the command of Army Group B. Since this was under his Chief of Staff SPEIDEL in the absence of Field Marshal ROMMEL, it should come as no surprise to anyone what happened: without being cleared by the OKW Brigadeführer WITT's division was sent into the race by Army Group B, but instead of advancing to the beaches to save the Atlantic Wall, as previously planned, Army Group B (General SPEIDEL) gave the order at 7:00 a.m. that the division was available of the 81st Corps in Rouen and was to assemble in the area around Lisieux. How this nonsensical-sounding order came about has not been clarified to this day. The division was thus finally withdrawn from the fighting area. While the Allies had landed on both sides of the Orne and were pushing towards Caen, the 12th SS Panzer Division was to move to a non-threatened area without any prepared marching plans. In addition, the new staging area was quite limited and, because of the road crossings at Lisieux, provided a clear target for any interested Allied aircraft. Here too, as with the Panzer Lehr Division, it is difficult to believe in coincidences.

Between 10:00 and 11:00 the new marching plans were worked out and the division began to move.

While parts of the division were already moving towards Lisieux at 3:00 p.m., Army Group B received a new order from General SPEIDEL not to assemble around Lisieux but again in the area west of Caen. Purpose: to support a counterattack by the 84th Corps. The Panzergrenadier Regiment 25 received the

Order to turn back in the area west of Lisieux at around 4:00 p.m. and now had to cover another 70 kilometers just to get to the same staging area that it had wanted to advance to during the night.

In this way, the 12th SS Panzer Division was no longer deployed on June 6, 1944, but spent the day on the infected streets of Jabover. Terrible losses were the result of these "nonsensical" orders.

The 12th SS Panzer Division was now ordered to attack to the north on June 7 at 12:00 p.m. on the left of the 21st Panzer Division and to throw the Allies back into the sea. For the 21st Panzer Division, this order came 24 hours too late. She had rolled alone against the Allies on June 6, and now many of her tanks lay burned out and shot down on the beach.

Even on June 7, the Hitler Youth Division was not yet fully ready. So it came about that the SS Panzergrenadier Regiment 26 (Standartenfuhrer MOHNKE) had a marching distance of about 160 kilometers, twice as long as the sister Regiment 25. Everything was hampered by the enemy's air superiority and civilians flooding back from the combat zone. So these units did not arrive until June 8th and later at the front near Caen.

By midday on June 7, 50 Panzer IVs of the 12th SS Panzer Division were just available. As Herbert WALTHER, then an orderly officer in the Hitler Youth Division, wrote, the tanks had major mechanical problems because they had been on the road for many hours and kilometers.

A promising counterattack was difficult that day, but it was still possible to repel the English offensive on Caen with the well camouflaged Panzer IV while waiting for the arrival of the remaining troops. When a surprising counterattack to the coast was attempted in the chaos of the retreating English tanks, the attack, carried out by much too weak forces, ended up under English anti-tank and ship gun fire. Even if individual squads of the SS Division "Hitler-Jugend" repeatedly managed to sneak past the enemy positions and advance to the coast for several days, the English in their bridgeheads had already become much too strong due to constant reinforcements to be able to do this to be significantly thrown off balance.

Also the attempt of June 8, with the 26th Panzergrenadier

Regiment and the 1/SS-Panzer-Regiment 12 on the left flank to levy the Canadians in Norrey and Putot was in vain despite hard fighting that lasted into the night. The motto 'too little and too late' reigned supreme on the battlefield, nothing to offset the hard fact that Brigadeführer WITT's division was absent from the landing beaches during the crucial hours of June 6th.

WITT and MEYER ('Pantermeyer') also complained bitterly that they had been abandoned and that they were not given permission to take off for the ready -to-take -off supply transport aircraft intended for the division.¹ In fact, the 12th SS Panzer Division and the Panzer Lehr Division had no later than 10:00 a.m. on June 6, 1944, under the command of the 1st SS Panzer Corps, according to deployment plans that had been in place for a long time, against the still weak Allies. Both divisions had been alerted in good time on the night of the invasion, and even in the worst case, the two armored divisions could have been ready for a counterattack near Caen by the evening of June 6th.

Nevertheless, it did not come to that.^{2,3}

D-Day: unknown German counterattacks?

Post-war US Army reports⁴ speak of German counterattacks against the landing troops across Normandy on June 6, even without the decisive German Panzer attack. These stretched from the British airborne sector in the east to the US airborne sector in the west.

The uncoordinated counterattacks by the 709th Infantry Division against the US paratroopers in the Ste. Mère-Eglise have already been mentioned. But there were counterattacks elsewhere, even from 'static' divisions and from Ost battalions wherever possible. These uncoordinated unit-level counter-attacks were, in the US view, part of the aggressive German defensive tactics that made the Battle of Normandy so bitter and long-lasting.

The secret Allied deployment plans fall into German hands - and nothing happens

On June 7, 1944, the Germans had an almost unbelievable stroke of luck that could have decided the Battle of Normandy.⁵⁻⁷

¹ Statement by H. WEINMANN of August 16, 2006.

² Hrowe H. SAUNDERS, *The Victory Betrayed*, Druffel, Leoni 1984, pp. 127-141.

³ Samuel W. MITCHAM Jr., *The Desert Fox in Normandy*, Cooper Square 2001, pp. 72-79 and 94 ff.

⁴ David C. ISBY (ed.), *The German Army at D-Day* (Greenhill 2004), p. 231.

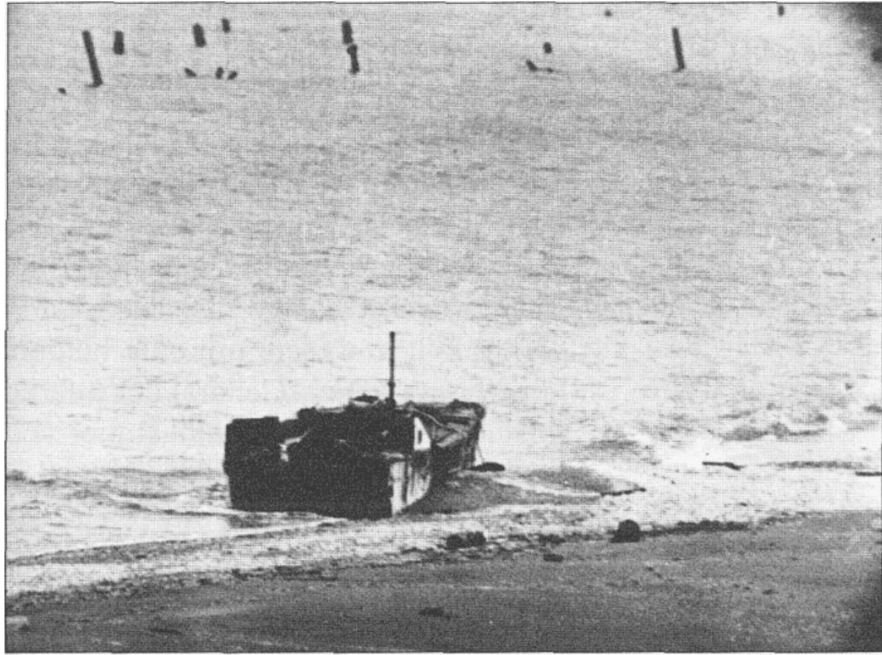
⁵ Paul CARRELL, *they are coming! The invasion of 1944*, Ullstein, Berlin 1979, p. 168 ff.

⁶ Janusz PIEKALKIEWICZ, *The Invasion, France 1944*, Südwest, Munich 1979, p. 177.

⁷ Samuel W. MITCHAM Jr., *The Desert Fox in Normandy* (Cooper Square 2001), p. 108.

In the late afternoon of that day, the 352nd Engineer Battalion and parts of the 916th Grenadier Regiment counterattacked to throw back the Americans from Vierville. During these fights, a Cossack patrol from East Battalion 493 under Lieutenant KORANIN discovered

a stranded American landing craft in the Vire estuary at G fosse Fontenay. Half a dozen dead American naval officers lay inside; one of them the 'Beachmaster', an officer in charge of a particular leg of the landing. He was lying over a small suitcase that ~~was written on~~ ^{was written on}



the evening of June 7, 1944, a mountain of damp, partially glued files were handed over to Lieutenant Colonel F. ZIEGELMANN of the 352nd Infantry Division. At first glance, you could see whole pages of passwords, numbers, and schedules. After the interpreters had been mobilized, it was less than half an hour before the sensation was clear: the Germans were completely unaware of the operational plan of the VI. fallen into the hands of the US Corps. The whole neat plan with each individual phase of D-Day (Day = Decision = decision) and all daily goals for the Cotentin Peninsula lay like an open book in front of the German leadership. The documents of the V. US Corps and the XXX. English corps were drawn. According to the plan, the Americans were to first unite their separate Utah and Omaha beachheads at Carentan, then shake hands with the British at Bageay, creating a coherent beachhead. Then the VII.

The stranded US landing craft spotted on Jun 8. The suitcase contained 100 pages of comprehensive surgical plans!
From: Janusz PIEKAL KIEWICZ, *The Invasion, France 1944*, Southwest, Munich

US Corps move north with main forces to capture Cherbourg.

On June 8, 1944, the decisive documents reached the 84th German Corps and were forwarded by a courier by express transport from there to the 7th Army, which was to forward the plans to Field Marshal ROMMEL and Field Marshal VON RUNDSTEDT.

Now there was one of those 'strange' delays again: the plan stayed with the 7th Army! The Chief of Staff of the 7th

Army General PEMSEL neither evaluated the operation plan of the V. US Corps, nor did he pass it on to the Army Group. However, General MARCKS, commander of the 84th German Corps, must have had a premonition and immediately sent his Ia Major Hasso FIEBIG with the original to Field Marshal ROMMEL and Field Marshal VON RUNDSTEDT. Apparently he was aware that not everything was going right in the 7th Army. By the evening of June 9, 1944, the plans had reached the commanders-in-chief in the west. There would still have been enough time to take decisive action against the Allied bridgeheads. General of the Infantry BLUMENTRITT, Chief of the General Staff of Field Marshal RUNDSTEDT (OB West), reported that the most important parts of the document were sent to the OKW on June 9, 1944 by OB West by telex and telephone. The complete operational plan was sent to the OKW by courier around June 10 or 11 and must have arrived there by June 12, 1944 at the latest.

Actually, the secret deployment and war target plans of the three corps should never have fallen into German hands, because they were stamped "to be destroyed before embarkation," and it will probably never be known why the "Beachmaster" took these top-secret papers with him led.

The fact remains that the Germans had got hold of papers proving beyond any doubt that the invasion had taken place and was no mere sham maneuver, and which, moreover, gave away the Allied intentions, right down to the targets for the day. The captured plans of the V US Corps also contained a list and sketches of how the Allies expected the German armored divisions to deploy against the bridgehead.

The political goals of the Allies were dealt with in an appendix – right down to agreements with the Soviets.

But what use are all the papers if you don't react? Neither the 7th Army, nor the OB West, nor the OKW were willing to draw the decisive conclusions from the finder's luck. If the American secret documents had been used correctly, targeted measures would have made it possible to push in the beachheads

senior

Despite everything, the planned daily targets of the Allies were considerably muddled in the period that followed, and in the following eight weeks the Allies were only able to achieve their daily targets recorded in the documents several weeks later. However, this did not happen because of the betrayed plans, but because of the exceeding

stubborn resistance from front-line units. As will be shown later, the failure to respond to the captured plans was hardly a coincidence, but fits in seamlessly with other 'oddities' during the invasion battle.

The staff of the 84th German Corps, which was the first to grasp the significance of the captured documents, had to look on helplessly as the objectives of the attack marked on the plans were gradually being fulfilled.

On the other side of the front, the head of Allied reconnaissance had within twenty-four hours precise knowledge of the defenders' plans, which "German sources" reliably passed on to him.

7th/9th June 1944: How the German tanks were paralyzed again

Even on June 7, 1944, the Allied bridgehead in Normandy was not yet consolidated. In fact, on June 7, 1944, Field Marshal ROMMEL intended to throw the British I Corps back into the sea. Now, however, a myriad of obstacles in the German Army's command and reporting system prevented the planned attack from being coordinated. The 1st SS Panzer Corps was neither able to send orders to its troops nor to the Army High Command regularly, nor was it able to find out how the situation was developing in the Army.

Of course, this postwar chaos has been attributed to "excessive radio station failure," but astute readers of this book can imagine that other factors were at work as well. In fact, the General Command lacked any overview of the enemy and the situation at the 21st and 12th SS Panzer Divisions.

On June 8, 1944, a coordinated attack by the German armored divisions towards the coast was ordered. The 'chaos' in the German chain of command continued unabated that day, and so another opportune moment was missed for the planned armored counterattack northward with three armored divisions side by side. On that day, the Allies had managed to unite their bridgeheads. There was still a gap between the Utah section and the other four. This was another chance for the Germans!



Leo GEYR
FROM SCHWEPENBURG

1 Samuel W. MITCHAM jr.,
The Desert Fox in Normandy
(Cooper Square 2001), pp.
109 f.

2 Frederik
WINTERBOTHAM, *Action
Ultra. Germany's code
machine helped the Allies
win*, Moewig, Rastatt 1984,
pp. 138-146.

3 Albert KESSELRING,
Soldier up to the last day,
Bublies, Schnellbach 2000,
p. 363.

In the end it was possible to consolidate the "Panzergruppe West" and on June 9, 1944 General Leo GEYR VON SCHWEP PENBURG was ready to carry out the long-delayed German armored counterattack – three days too late! Before the battle could develop properly, however, General Geyr's headquarters twelve miles south-west of Caen were accidentally and utterly destroyed by a well-aimed Allied fighter-bomber attack. Almost all staff officers of the 'Panzergruppe West' were killed or seriously injured. ROMMEL narrowly escaped the attack, having left the headquarters of Panzer Group West just an hour before the bombs fell.

In the post-war period, General GEYR's staff was accused of neglecting the headquarters' camouflage due to a lack of western experience. "Four large radio trucks, several office trailers and tents were said to have been parked in the open air and would undoubtedly have alerted the Allied reconnaissance pilots flying past to the importance of the object."¹ To date, there is no evidence for this theory.

Others say Allied radio reconnaissance and 'Ultra' code breakers in London have located GEYR headquarters . Curiously enough, the authoritative Allied reports on Operation Ultra fail to indicate that Ultra was in fact responsible for this discovery.² One can assume that Ultra's advocates would have boasted of having found GEYR's headquarters if "Ultra" really had located the headquarters on its own.

It is therefore doubtful whether a lack of camouflage or 'Ultra' was the decisive factor. There is some evidence that the crucial references to headquarters could also have come from the German side.

This would not even have been an isolated case, but had a method in the West. In fact, there was later the – failed – attempt by the Allies to eliminate the German high command on the Rhine front with a similar "beheading attack" in March 1945. Here, too, German treason can be assumed with a probability bordering on certainty. Field Marshal Albert KESSEL RING reported³ that as soon as he had taken command of the West in March 1945, he almost fell victim to an Allied air raid. This happened during a discussion between KESSEL RING and Minister of Armaments SPEER and the armaments industrialist ROECHLING. The enemy had to go to KESSELRING, as in three (!)

previous attacks on his headquarters in Italy, knew exactly the arrangements and habits of his staff. After all, the first Jabo attacks were against the fully occupied dining rooms and KESSELRING's bedrooms and study. Here, as in Normandy a few months earlier, it was not an "ultra" but targeted betrayal at work.

The 'decapitation' against GEYR's armored group had to be goal fully achieved. The counterattack was canceled.

After the badly injured tank commander Baron GEYR

VON SCHWEPPENBURG had had to leave the western front in the direction of the hospital, SS Obergruppenfuhrer Sepp DIETRICH temporarily took command of the 'Panzergruppe West' and immediately stopped all counterattacks. The Allies did it!

All eyes were now on the Carentan sector, where German paratroopers were still preventing the American 7th Corps from linking up with the rest of the 21st Army Group on Utah Beach. Here the last of the OKW reserve troops, the 17.

SS Panzergrenadier Division "Götz von Berlichingen" achieved the impossible and, together with Baron VON DER HEYDTE 's paratroopers, threw the Americans back into the sea.

The II SS Panzer Corps: Bad planning or sabotage?

When the 1st SS Panzer Corps was thrown into Russia in connection with the Stalingrad crisis at the beginning of 1943, a gap was created in the West. It was therefore decided to set up a II.

SS Panzer Corps. For this purpose, the 9th SS Panzergrenadier Division "Hohenstaufen" and the 10th SS Panzergrenadier Division "Frundsberg" from the years 1924-1926 were formed. In November 1943, both SS Panzergrenadier Divisions were reorganized into Panzer Divisions. Their standard of training in the spring of 1944 was considered good enough to meet the task of counter-invasion.

In the winter of 1943/44, the II SS Panzer Corps had been transferred to Normandy and posed a threat to the landing troops. But things were to change here, too. To the east, the 1st Panzer Army had been surrounded in the Ukraine and Field Marshal Erich Fritz VON MANSTEIN was urgently requesting help to end the encirclement. The High Command of the Wehrmacht then decided to deploy the II SS Panzer Corps for this relief attack. This happened against the opinion of Adolf HITLER, who

wanted to keep this corps in its original task in France. We do not know who made the proposal to move the II.

made popular with the SS Panzer Corps in the OKW. After HITLER Field Marshal VON MANSTEIN had promised the II. SS Panzer Corps on March 25, 1944, it was transferred to wintry Galicia by express rail transport in the first days of April 1944. There, the II. SS Panzer Corps quickly rectified the difficult situation. A complete success was achieved with their relief attack on Tarnopol by the SS Panzer Division "Hohenstaufen" and the re-establishment of contact with the surrounded 1st Panzer Army (Hube-Kessel) by the SS Panzer Division "Frundsberg".

After the fighting was over, the two armored divisions were not immediately transferred back to France, where the threat of invasion was ever more imminent, but remained largely inactive on the eastern front. The divisions took this as a rest period and continued their training, combined with sporadic partisan combat. Unusual!

So it was that when the invasion began on June 6, 1944, the II SS Panzer Corps was absent. Again, the question can be asked as to whether there was bad planning or sabotage.

Both SS Panzer Divisions received the order to move to the invasion area far too late. There were speedy shipments onto the railways in the greater Lemberg area, while an advance commando under the director of the division 'Hohenstaufen', SS Sturmbannführer Helmut THÖLE, was already in France for the return route, which was now being delayed by the Allied air forces, partisan activity and bridge blowings was to accomplish.

The transfer of the II. SS Panzer Corps to the western front, which would have been possible just a few days earlier without any problems, ended up taking weeks. It was not until the end of June 1944 that the two divisions arrived in their designated staging area, where they were deployed from June 29, 1944. Over 20 days late!

Contrary to ROMMEL 's plans to split the enemy bridgehead in the Bayeux area and cut off the English from their supplies, General DOLLMANN, the commander-in-chief of the 7.

Army, a misappropriation of the II. SS Panzer Corps, which was only just on the march and was now being forced to regroup with its foremost operational units. It looked like a repeat of SPEIDEL's June 6 method. DOLLMANN HAUSSER called twice and gave him the order to defend from

Caen to intervene, twice he recanted afterwards. ›man‹ also ignored the justified objections of the commanding general, SS-Gruppenfuhrer Paul HAUSSER . Instead, the II. SS Panzer Corps had to take on the English at Caen. One of the many wrong decisions made by the higher German leadership in France since the landing of June 6, 1944!

HAUSSER had asked for the order to be postponed in order to be able to prepare a real attack with the aim of cutting off the narrow endangered British "finger" on both sides. This would have been close to catastrophe for the Allies. Instead, DOLLMANN insisted on immediate action by the II. SS Panzer Corps in the form of a frontal attack near Caen.¹

¹ David IRVING, *Battle of Europe*, DSZ, Munich 2004, p. 144.

Treason involved? The great counterattack against the British bridgehead on June 29, 1944

After weeks of delays, on June 29, 1944, the German commanders repeatedly demanded a major counterattack. In fact, the fate of the British beachhead depended on the outcome of this German counterattack.²⁻⁴ The Germans had assembled eight armored divisions for this operation. However, three of these divisions were already severely weakened by losses in previous battles, and the remaining armored divisions were not yet fully deployed

² Kenrteth MACKSAY, *Rommel. Battles and campaigns*, Motorbuch, Stuttgart 1982, p. 287 f.

³ Janusz PIEKALKIEWICZ, *Invasion, France 1944*, Südwest, Munich 1979, p. 164.

Mission room reached. Nevertheless, DOLLMANN gave the order to attack.

When the attack began, Field Marshals ROMMEL and VON RUNDSTEDT were no longer on the invasion front, but had gone to Berchtesgaden to talk to HITLER. The commander of the 7th Army, General Friedrich DOLLMANN, had committed suicide before the German offensive started. Was this just a bad omen for the attack, or was there more to it?

⁴ MIHAG-Switzerland, "The II. SS Panzer Corps in Defense Against the Allied Invasion", in: *The Volunteer*, 7/2004, p.14.

On Thursday, June 29, the order for the II

Bomb attacks can only move into their ready rooms with a delay. At 2:00 p.m. the attack by the 9th SS Panzer Division "Hohenstaufen" began, supported by the 19th and 20th SS Panzergrenadier Regiments, which initially quickly gained ground.

Only half an hour later was the 10th SS Panzer Division "Frundsberg" able to take up action. Then disaster struck! As in Operation Capri near Medenine in North Africa in 1943, German armored divisions were massed against British defensive positions on the invasion front, where they were already well prepared for the German attack, and as in 1943 the Germans failed again in front of the fiery wall of British anti-aircraft fire. This time, too, the attackers could hardly get within operational range of their weapons from the firing positions of British tanks and anti-tank guns, well camouflaged behind rows of bushes. As the German attack came under increasingly heavy British naval artillery fire, the II SS Panzer Corps was pushed into the defense.

The "Hohenstaufen" division was able to find the ordered places beforehand conquered for a short time, but they were lost again by the evening as a result of the massive English counterattacks.

The 'Frundsberg' division managed to conquer the strategically important heights 112 (the 'Dead Man' Hill in World War II) and 113 with difficulty. In the end, both divisions did not achieve their goals, and the night raids were also unsuccessful.

The artillery superiority of the Allies also contributed to the failure of the German counterattack. While the English could respond to every German artillery shell with 20 of their own kills, the artillery of the II SS Panzer Corps sometimes had to fetch their own ammunition from the Paris area: a supply failure at a crucial time, although actually enough supplies were available.

As before with Medenine, it was obvious that the German offensive had been betrayed to the English long before.

It is striking that the "Ultra" radio reconnaissance reports did not contain any reference to the planned major counter-offensive until the night of June 28, so that the early warnings probably came from another source.¹ In this context, the suicide of the commander-in-chief of the 7th Army, General DOLLMANN, took on a new meaning. Strikingly, General DOLLMANN's suicide was countered by HITLER's 7th Army.

¹ Frederik WINTERBOTHAM, *Aktion Ultra, Germany's code machine stops the Allies winning*, Moewig, Rastatt 1984, p. 142 f. WINTERBOTHAM then also wrote that only the British air force was able to exploit the intercepted radio message in good time. This would not have sufficed for building up deeply echeloned anti-tank fronts like the ones presented here.

depicted as a stroke.¹ This still appears in most of the military literature on World War II today.

Conclusion about the failed German armored counter-attack

After the German coastal defenses had not been alerted in time, the second fatal “mistake” of the Germans was the failure to launch a counterattack by German intervention reserves on the beach, as planned in the German war plan and feared by the Allies.

This armored counter-attack was repeatedly delayed and bogged down by the misconduct of certain people in their own command, even though the armored forces required for this were ready. In 1954, American, English and German officers who had taken part in the invasion battle gathered in Normandy and discussed the German chances of success at the time. The unanimous result was that if the armored reserves had been used in good time, there would have been a German victory "with a fair degree of certainty."² Despite the most thorough preparations and complicated deception maneuvers, the Western Allies would have had neither their multiple material superiority nor total air and sea supremacy without the "strange paralysis of the German countermeasures" was enough to win!

¹ What is striking about the death of Generaloberst DOLLMANN is that he did not shoot himself but took poison. This speaks against an affective act. For example, cyanide capsules could only be obtained from special laboratories. In radio messages on the night before June 28/29, 1944, HITLER held DOLLMANN responsible for the early loss of Cherbourg, and now the Colonel-General was threatened with an investigation by the OKW.

² Bernhard ZÜRNER, *Hitler. General against his will?*, Vowinkel, Stegen 2001 p. 335.

Dept. 5: The bridgehead is established or: Treason on the Cotentin Peninsula

How Carentan Was Lost

After the Allied bridgeheads had been established in Normandy, the outcome of the Battle of Carentan was the first warning sign that the Normandy invasion would end unhappily for the Germans.

Even before the invasion began, the Germans knew that Carentan would play a key role in the event of an Allied landing in Normandy. A successful possession of this town, situated at the narrowest point of the Cotentin peninsula, would act as a barricade against further advance by possible invading forces.

In order to eliminate this possibility, Field Marshal ROM MEL had transferred the 6th Parachute Regiment under Colonel Baron VON DER HEYDTE there. With its 3000 men, the 6th paratrooper regiment was considered the toughest German paratrooper regiment. It was given the task of holding up invading troops that had landed until a counterattack by armored German forces could follow shortly thereafter. If one believes the statements of his former commander, Baron VON DER HEYDTE, Field Marshal ROMMEL had also given the 6th Parachute Regiment a firm role in the event of an uprising by the western army against HITLER.^{1,2}

1 Charles WHITING, *The March on London*, Pen & Sword 1996, pp. 10-24.

2 Samuel W. MITCHAM Jr., *The Desert Fox in Normandy*, Cooper 2001, (Götz von Berlichingen), p. 125.

After the landing bridge heads were established, the Allies endeavored to create a single bridgehead.

Here Allied soldiers are fighting from village to village to establish a bridgehead tern.





The Battle of Carentan, June 8-15, 1944, claimed many casualties on both sides. Here the wounded nest with soldiers from the 6th Parachute Regiment and the 17th SS Panzergrenadier Division "Götz von Berlichingen".

Baron VON DER HEYDTE alerted his unit immediately after the start of the Allied airborne landings and used them very successfully against the American paratroopers. Through committed counterattacks, he repeatedly brought them to the brink of defeat.

On the evening of the third day it even looked as if VON DER HEYD TE's paratroopers were about to drive their American colleagues from the 82nd Airborne Division out of the little town of St. Mère-Eglise, which they had captured immediately after landing.

In the end, however, the Allied superiority was victorious here too, because while the Americans were constantly being replenished with personnel and material, Colonel VON DER HEYDTE was unable to compensate for his own losses. There was no replenishment! So it came about that the 6th Parachute Regiment, already looking forward to victory, had to retreat more and more onto the defensive and could only hope to hold the city of Carentan until the promised counter-attack by German tanks could take place. Eventually, the 3,000 remaining "green devils" were opposed by three larger American combat units: the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions and the US 90th Infantry Division with over 30,000 soldiers. The headquarters of the 84th German Corps replied laconically to the paratrooper regiment's desperate cries for help that "paratroopers only need knives."

This sent angry replies from Baron VON DER HEYDTE

84th Corps finally got a supply column with urgently needed mortar ammunition. However, they were of the wrong caliber and intended for French booty grenade launchers. Luckily for them, the resourceful paratroopers were able to use an emergency measure by wrapping the mortar shells, which were too small, in cloth and thus successfully firing them from the barrels of their 8 cm grenade launchers 34.

Was this supply error coincidence? In fact, when the German troops invaded France, they captured large quantities of the French Stokes-Brandt 81.4 mm caliber grenade launcher.

However, the Stokes-Brandtwerfer was the market leader in Europe for infantry mortars before the war, and its caliber of 81.4 mm was the same as that chosen by the Wehrmacht.

This meant that the ammunition of the different countries was fully interchangeable. However, the Germans had also captured small quantities of the French 5 cm grenade launchers 203 (F) and 6 cm grenade launchers 225 (F). However, these small light weapons were only captured in small numbers and were never used up by garrison troops of the occupying power or other second-line troops. Frontline troops did not use them.



Werner OSTENDORFF
(1903-1945).

The fact that the German supply column brought the ammunition for these small grenade launchers to embattled Carentan can hardly be justified by mistakes made or other decisions made during the stress of the battle. Every supply officer knew that these types of ammunition were not introduced at the front. The following night, the German Air Force managed to send a squadron of the old three-engine Junkers Ju 52 transporters on a daring night flight to the embattled Carentan, despite the Allied radar night fighters. The transporters dropped ten supply containers on parachutes for the German paratroopers. When Colonel VON DER HEYDTE'S men risked their lives to recover some of them from the swamps of the surrounding no-man's-land, they made a macabre discovery: the containers dropped by parachute not only contained the scarce ammunition for handguns and mortars, but in at least one In the case of the so-called 'Pariser', as condoms were called at the time. Baron VON DER HEYDTE commented on this example of transport officer 'humor' with the following words: "What does Corps Headquarters want us to do - fuck our way out?"¹ Shortly thereafter, Baron VON DER HEYDTE started towards the town of Carentan

¹ This is reminiscent of incidents in Stalingrad, when a dozen boxes of condoms were flown in in one day. Colonel FINCKH, who also directed in Normandy, was responsible at the time. See: Hans MEISER, *Verrätee Verräter*, Druffel, Stegen 2006, p. 232.

clear. In the afternoon of the following day, when fresh American troops were already firmly established in the city, Colonel VON DER HEYDTE met SS Major General Wernher OSTENDORFF, the commander of the 17th SS Panzergrenadier Division "Götz von Berlichingen", while exploring retreat positions. , and his chief of staff, who had ventured out on a reconnaissance mission in their clean, shiny staff car to the front of the American positions .

replace the parachute regiment and drive the Americans back to the coast. However, the time for the German defenders of Carentan was now up, because even while elements of the 17th SS Panzergrenadier Division were assembling for a counterattack, VON DER HEYDTE had the remaining districts evacuated. To this day, there is a dispute in the history of the war as to whether this withdrawal from the key position of Carentan was necessary. But there is no doubt that this unauthorized retreat was a heavy blow to the German army in Normandy. Brigadeführer OSTENDORFF had to determine how far the Americans had advanced, and he decided to have his division counterattack as quickly as possible, even if it was not yet fully assembled.

The 17th SS Panzergrenadier Division "Götz von Berlichingen" was a fully equipped division with more than 17,000 soldiers



Friedrich August Freiherr
FROM HEYDTE.



The typical terrain of the Cotentin Peninsula, with its swamps and hedgerows, offered opportunities for Allied snipers, also and especially during the German counterattack launched at dawn on June 12, in which the "Götz von Berlichingen" lost many men to headshots. From: Jean Claude PERRICAULT and Rolf MEISTER, *Götz Berlichingen*, Vol. 1, hemdal, B

sion, but she lacked equipment. Four of their 6 grenadier battalions were motorized only with improvised transports (mostly Italian vehicles), and two battalions were equipped only with bicycles. The division's tank battalion had no tanks, but at least its anti-tank battalion had 37 modern SPGs.

According to former members of the division, OSTENDORFF knew it would be a tough battle, but he relied on Army Group B's firm promise that heavy artillery would be brought in to the division in good time during the night to drive the Americans out of their prepared defensive positions. 1 Heavy transport columns with articulated lorries, which Army Group B had sent to support, soon arrived during the night. The next morning, however, there was outrage among the SS soldiers. In fact, they had not been sent the promised heavy artillery, but instead the columns had supplied landing pontoons. Brigade Commander OSTENDORFF raged and exclaimed: "Shall we cross over to England?"

¹ Statement by eyewitness ›Hagen‹ of November 10, 2003 to the author.

And so it happened as it had to happen: Without artillery or tanks, the parts of the Götz von Berlichingen Division that had arrived by then and the survivors of the 6th Parachute Regiment attacked the American positions with great enthusiasm. Against a threefold superiority, they managed to re-establish themselves on the outskirts of Carentan and advance to within 5 kilometers of the sea. With their binoculars, the SS soldiers could already observe the supply traffic on the landing beaches. Finally, entrenched US troops, Allied naval artillery and the Luftwaffe stopped the counterattack of the Götz von Berlichingen and the 6th Parachute Regiment, and the positions already won had to be evacuated, with heavy losses.

It is certain that the conspirators had a part in the Allied victory at Carentan, blocking supplies to the defenders at the crucial moment or sabotaging the counterattack by misdelivering.

The fall of Carentan meant that the Anglo-Americans now had a single major beachhead, stretching from the English air-landing bridgehead east of the River Orne to Montebourg, 16 miles south-east of Cherbourg. The Americans were thus able to spread across the Cotentin Peninsula and isolate Cherbourg to the northwest.

Even today, surviving members of the ›Götz von Berlichingen‹ division get angry when they tell the story of the landing pontoons supplied instead of artillery, which was partly responsible for the heavy toll of the division's blood during its counterattack. Apparently, the conspirators felt so secure on the part of the conspirators that they felt they could display this kind of "strange humor" with impunity.

The great port: Cherbourg, in the summer of 1944, the first important Allied objective

US Army report 1946, interviewer's note: "Adm. DÖNITZ made some other speculations about the surrender of Cherbourg, but since they were only speculations which are not in agreement with the testimony of officers close to the scene, they have been omitted.« (Adm. DÖNITZ expressed some further speculations about the surrender from Cherbourg, but since these were just speculations, inconsistent with statements made by other officers closer to the scene, they were omitted).

On June 26, 1944, the sea fortress of Cherbourg capitulated to the Americans, taking Hitler, the OKW and Field Marshal ROMMEL by surprise. The remnants of individual pockets of resistance stopped



Aerial view of the strategic port city of Cherbourg in 1944.

left alone, still out until June 30th. Compared to the bad experience the Allies later had with the defenders of the port cities of Brest and St. Malo, the garrison of the heavily fortified Cherbourg surrendered after a fairly short struggle. The question might arise as to why the important bastion capitulated so quickly.

The 'oddities' around Cherbourg were also documented in pictures. Rochus MISCH, HITLER's bodyguard and chief telephone operator, remembered exactly how in the summer of 1944 a series of photos about Sweden caused a sensation in the Reich Chancellery. It showed how a senior German Wehrmacht commander from the Cherbourg area smiled and toasted two Allied soldiers after the fall of the fortress. It was further said that this officer scarcely fired a shot with his cannon. MISCH is the most important surviving eyewitness from the Fuhrer's environment and has only recently ended his decades of silence.¹ Contrary to everything that is said today about the importance of the artificial harbors, called 'Mulberries', the harbor was owned of Cherbourg with decisive influence over the weal and woe of Operation Overlord. On June 21, a hurricane had blown the Mulberry Port B into its component parts, and two days earlier the US Mulberry

1 Rochus MISCH, *J'étais garde du corps d'Hitler*, Le Cherche-Midi 2006, p. 163.

had been destroyed at Saint-Laurent by the same storm. The loss of tonnage for the Allies amounted to a multiple of the invasion day. The 'floating ports off the Channel coast were only a temporary solution. General EISENHOWER wrote in *Crusade in Europe*: "If we do not take Cherbourg quickly and the enemy can stop us first, our invasion operation may collapse."

The general's German helpers were also of crucial importance here, because the invading armies, hungry for supplies, could hardly afford a month-long siege of the strong sea fortress.

In statements for the US Army in 1946, Grand Admiral Karl DÖNITZ and Rear Admiral WAGNER for the OKM (High Command of the Navy) in an oral interview apparently expressed such a sensational thesis about the quick capitulation of Cherbourg that it was interview was completely deleted. The American interviewer stated as a 'justification' in the later publication that it was only speculation that was not in accordance with the statements of other officials

graceful who would have been closer to the action. That's why he left them out. DÖNITZ ' and WAGNER 's statements about the events around Cherbourg must have been an extremely problematic matter for the Allies, because in comparable cases the US Army summaries correctly reproduced the opinions of individuals that differed from the majority of the others . Here it was different. The only sentence that DÖNITZ was allowed to publish about the port city of Cherbourg reads: "I hear that the (German) sailors in Cherbourg were furious about the surrender of the army. " Invasion did not produce a German summary, only an English translation which, according to the editors, was not a 100% accurate literal translation.

1 David C. ISBY (ed.), *The German Army at D-Day*, Greenhill (2004), p. 85 ff.

In the other interviews, however, this was the case, so that the question arises as to what is being kept secret here. Is the genuine German summary just being hidden, or was it destroyed?

In complete contrast to this, the statement by Field Marshal ROMMEL's Chief of Staff, Hans SPEIDEL, was called "Pillar of knowledge in the field of history of the Battle of Normandy". Normandy) referred to. »His wisdom as an individual and as a human being gives his report an excellent stamp of value.« How nice that sounds!

Incidentally, General Hans SPEIDEL's Normandy report is still used today as the standard for writing the history of the events in the. Summer 1944. But even the Americans were already saying at the time that SPEIDEL's memoirs were "excellently thought out" (that is, thought up?), but that many points could not go unchallenged.

Irrespective of this, they gave SPEIDEL the stamp of truthfulness.

Was the coastal artillery at Cherbourg and elsewhere sabotaged?

As fighting neared Cherbourg Fortress in the final weeks of June 1944, the German shore batteries were to form the heart of the defense.

The Battle of Fort du Roule, which overlooks the southern entrance to the city of Cherbourg. It fell on June 25, 1944.



The naval target artillery of the sea fortress was an obvious danger to the Allied warships, and when on June 25, 1944 between 10:00 and 12:00 the Allied ship squadron with cruisers, battleships, destroyers and minesweepers appeared in front of the fortress, he forced the defensive fire the bunkered German guns prevented the fleet from retreating out of reach of the defenders. To this day it is disputed how many Allied ships were damaged or even sunk in these attacks.

Fighting in the streets of Cherbourg, which died a day later, on the 26th. June 1944 (General von SCHLIEBEN) capitulated.



But when Cherbourg was attacked from land that afternoon, the sea target batteries could no longer take part in the fighting because all their forces had to be used for rear defense. The strange German mistake at Cherbourg was that many batteries lacked infantry protection for close defense or, where present, was withdrawn at the beginning of fighting on more important (!) sections of the fortress.

So the soldiers at the guns only had the choice between fighting their actual task with artillery or fighting infantry to hold their position as long as possible against the advancing enemy from land. The situation only improved when German troops who had been driven out of their original positions had fled to the artillery bunkers of the batteries, and the batteries that had survived up to that point were given sufficient self-protection.¹ But it was not only the coastal artillery near Cherbourg that suffered from remarkable weaknesses. Even today, surviving veterans of the invasion battle bitterly recount that just a few days before the Allied landings, target devices and breechblocks of guns specially designed for shelling sea targets had to be sent to Paris for inspection "by order from above".² What is striking, however, is that from the German coastal batteries Gatteville (4 x 10.5 cm field guns with considerable firepower), Pointe de Neville (4 x English 9.4 cm anti-aircraft guns suitable for sea target bombardment), Seeadler (4 x French 19.4 cm naval guns guns for sea target bombardment) did not allow any combat reports to be found in German and Allied archives. Does this mean that these three batteries together in the Army Coastal Battery Graye near Bayeux, about which there are also no reports, belonged to the batteries which, because of their remote aiming devices and breechblocks, could not actively participate in combat? Embarrassing Questions!

1 R. Heinz ZIMMERMANN,
*The Atlantic Wall from
Dunkirk to Cherbourg*, Schild
(1982), p. 1 74.

² Testimony by
Theodor MÜNZ from
November 11, 2003

Individual German conspirators also played an active role in the cessation of German resistance at Cherbourg Fortress. Such an incident occurred in the case of the Hamburg battery. The Hamburg naval battery, with its four 24 cm caliber naval guns and a maximum range of 28,000 m, was one of the main sources of fire fighting in this area against the Allied bombardment fleet. She scored hits on Allied destroyers and cruisers, forcing the Allied fleet to veer north out of battery fire. The "Hamburg" battery was finally surrounded from land by the American landing operations

and after heavy air raids on 27 June, attacked by the US 22nd Infantry Division with the support of tank artillery and mortars. After the attack had been repelled with heavy casualties for the attackers, the German garrison blew up all guns on June 28 and went into captivity.

What is suppressed in today's literature, however, is that on June 28, 1944, a major from the German army appeared in the battery and demanded that Lieutenant Rudi GELBHAAR, the battery commander, hand over the "Hamburg" coastal battery. After repeated refusals and a renewed explanation of the tactical situation by the higher-ranking officer, Lieutenant GELBHAAR decided to surrender to the Allies after detonating the guns, since he had had no contact with the naval commander at Cherbourg since June 26. The "Hamburg" coastal battery could have held out against the Allies for a longer period of time after large parts of the army troops had withdrawn to the battery position, which had considerably increased the defensive power of the strategically well-placed position. According to US reports, after the intervention of the German major, 990 German soldiers were taken prisoner when the position was handed over.

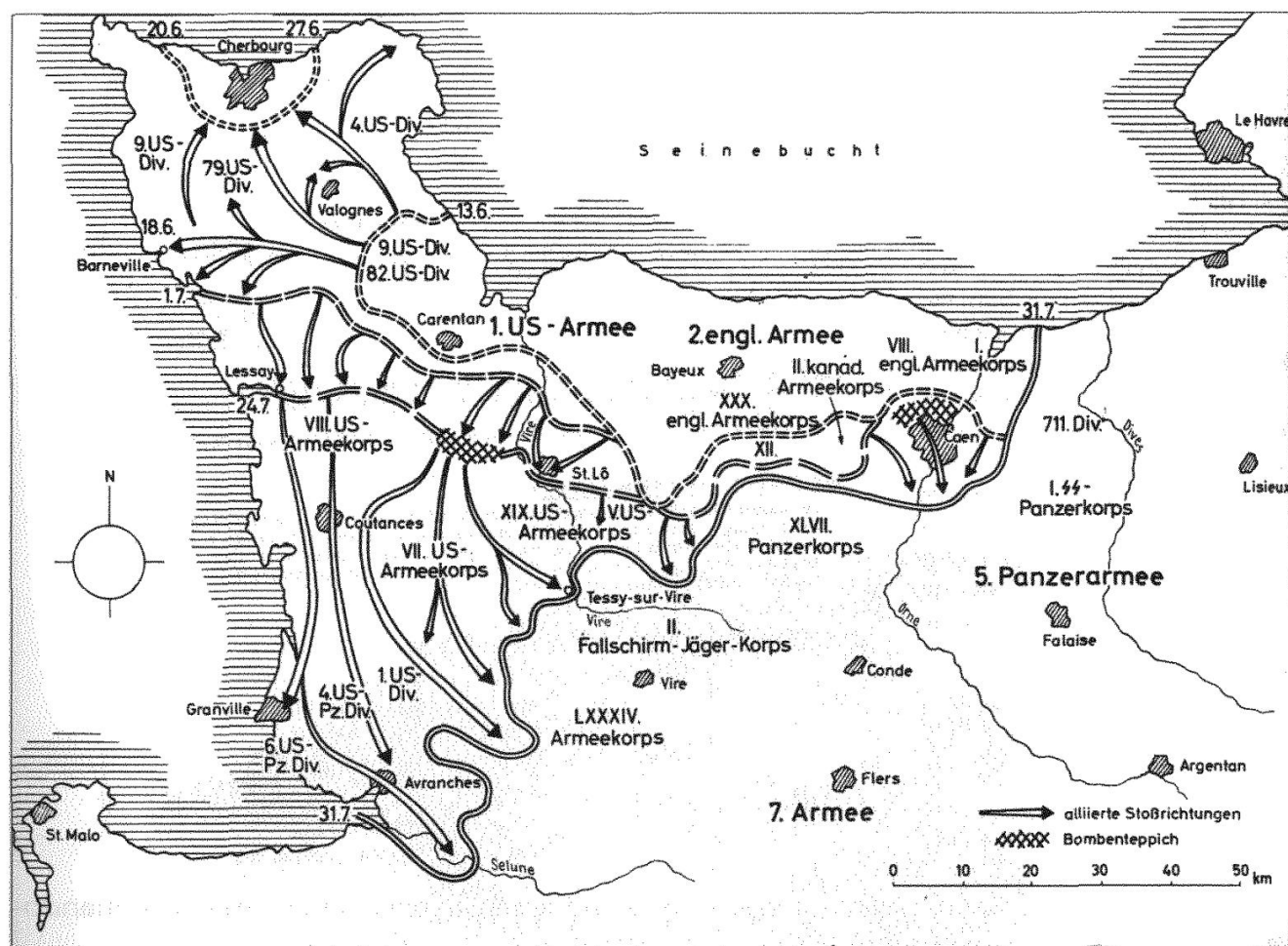
Without the capture of the battery "Hamburg" the port of Cherbourg had been worthless for Allied supplies.

To this day, of course, the name of the German officer who persuaded the handover of the battery has remained just as obscure as the route by which he got into the battery (through American lines?). If it had been a normal occurrence, this man's name would have been well known in contemporary history, as "A Hero Prevented Unnecessary Bloodshed."

After the fall of Cherbourg; Hitler's Reaction to Allied Victories in the West

By mid-June 1944 it was clear that the fighting in Normandy had developed into an unprecedented battle of materiel that was becoming more and more reminiscent of the trench warfare of 1918 on the western front.

While the Allies were able to replace their losses immediately with their enormous material reserves, this was not possible for the Germans, especially since the Red Army began its largest and most successful operation of the entire war on June 22, 1944 with the smashing of the "Army Group Center". The war on two fronts – actually it was a



War of three fronts, if you include the Italian front - also influenced the outcome of the invasion battle of 1944!

HITLER knew how important it was for the Western Allies to establish themselves successfully on the European mainland and followed the front in France with great uneasiness had seized the initiative.

When the Americans captured the port of Cherbourg at the end of June 1944, HITLER was very angry about the enemy's success. As he had done before after the absence of many German commanders from their posts on the night of the invasion, he again demanded a thorough investigation into how the loss of the Cotentin peninsula had come about. Of course, everything went haywire again, and no outcome was ever known.

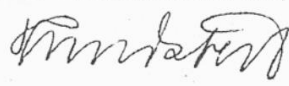
Even weeks after the start of the Allied landings, there were confusing and often contradictory situations on the invasion front

The situation in Normandy from June 13 to July 31, 1944.

From: Hans-Adolf JACOBSEN and Hans DOLLINGER, *The Second World War*, Vol. 3, Desch, Munich-Vienna

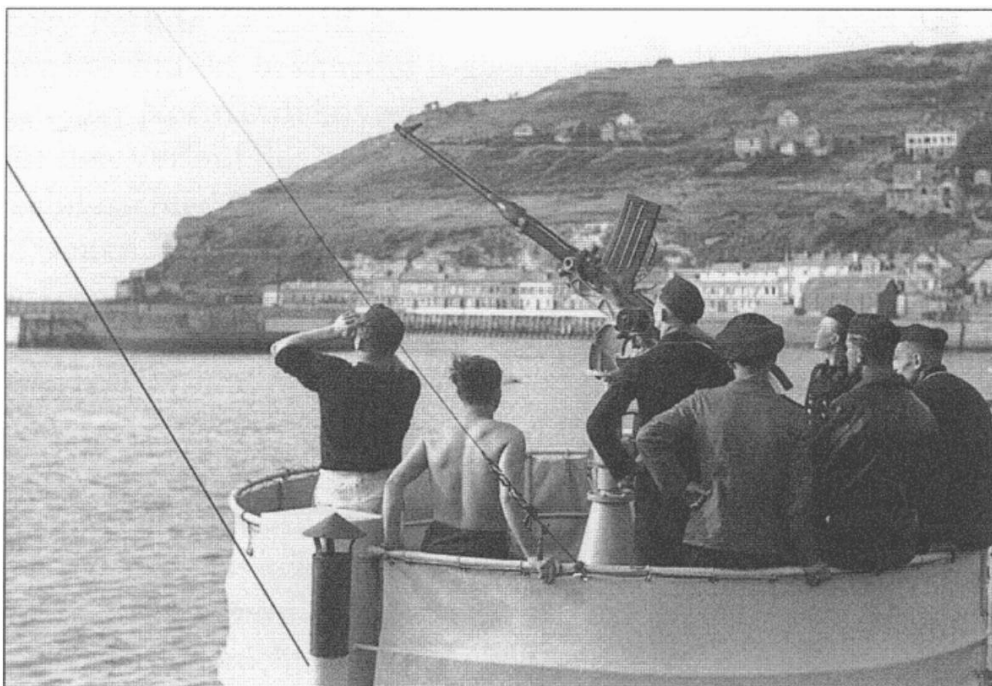
"Hold at all costs!" Promulgated after the fall of Cherbourg HITLER for the first time in the West one of his 'Stay Orders' known from the Eastern Front.

From the second part of the order of July 1, 1944, it is clear that the armored divisions were to be freed by newly approaching infantry divisions. Had this been done, another threat to the invasion would have resulted.

Geheime Kommandosache			
Cheffache			
Nur durch Offizier			
1.7.44	Heeresgruppe B	KR-Blitz	6. Auf.
18.35	nachr.: Lfl.Kdo. 3	KR	6. Auf.
	" O.Qu.West	KR	
			In Stabe:
			IaP
			Ic
			V.O.Pz.
			KTb
			Ia (Entw.)
Bezug:	1) Ob.West rüm.1a Nr. 504/44 g.Kdos.Ch. vom 1.7.44 2) An H.Gru.B u. Lfl.3 mit Ob.West rüm.1a Nr.505/44 g.K.Ch. vom 1.7.44 3) OK/WFSt/Op.(H)/West (gez.Jodl.)Nr.772243/44 g.K.Ch.v.1.7.4.		
" Der Führer hat entschieden :			
Die augenblicklichen Stellungen sind zu halten. Durch stärke Verteidigung oder durch örtliche Gegenangriffe ist jeder weitere feindliche Durchbruch zu verhindern. Der Aufmarsch ist fortzusetzen, weitere schnelle Verbände durch herankommende Inf.Divn. freizumachen. Näherer Befehl folgt. "			
Zusatz Ob.West :			
<u>Absetzbewegungen sind nicht durchzuführen.</u>			
Der Oberbefehlshaber West			
			
Generalfeldmarschall			
rüm.1a Nr. 509/44 g.Kdos.Ch.			

the reports of the various offices and command authorities.

According to reports from HITLER's adjutant, Nicolaus VON BELOW, the SS units, although involved in the heaviest fighting, still reported confidently. The situation reports of VON RUNDSTEDT, ROMMEL and VON SCHWEPPENBURG (Commander-in-Chief of Panzer Group West) sounded different, predicting the collapse of the defensive front. Also in order to be able to better assess these opposing viewpoints, HITLER has been inviting Field Marshal Hans-Günther VON KLUGE to all military talks at the Berghof since the last few days of June. According to Nicolaus VON BELOW, the days spent together on the Obersalzberg went well. HITLER had confidence in VON KLUGE when, on July 1, after the loss of Cherbourg, he appointed him as VON RUNDSTEDT's successor, unaware that Hans-Günther VON KLUGE was connected with the resistance. At this point HITLER, who was usually suspicious, was convinced that the new OB West would be able to build up and hold a closed defensive front. He should be wrong.



Chapter 4

let down?
**The "Failures" of the Air Force and
Navy in Normandy**

Flak in Fécamp north of Le Havre,
during the Allied attack on Le
Havre on 14.

On June 1, 1944, the German anti-aircraft
guns were even banned from firing!

From: Jean-Paul DUBOSO a .

Max LEMAITRE, *Fécamp*
1939-1945, vol. 2, Bertout (1996).

Dept. 1: Without a chance?**The Fate of the Navy in Normandy****Before and After Landing:
Did the Navy Know the Truth?**

It was only through the research of the naval historian Jak P. MALLMANN SHOWELL that it became known what an important role the German Navy's radio observation service (B-Dienst) played during the Second World War.

The code breakers of the German Navy succeeded in various ways in breaking into the Allied naval secret keys, and they can be regarded as a small German variant of the Allied ultra-radio reconnaissance from Bletchley Park in England. While its activity was otherwise limited to naval warfare, the B Service acquired a very strong potential importance for the course of the entire campaign because of the amphibious component of the Normandy invasion.

Only, in contrast to Ultra, which almost completely dominated the overall Allied strategy during the Second World War, nobody in the German high command wanted to include the otherwise reliable reports of the B service in their own decision-making:

B-Service had noticed from its naval radio decoding and direction-measuring stations that the OKW's estimates of the Allied deployment were quite high and that it looked more like many units were being counted twice.

In fact, this was exactly the case, which the specialists of the B service could not of course imagine.¹ The OKW also paid the greatest attention to the alleged large-scale Allied deployment in the Kent area and requested

information about it.

But the information from B-Service could not find any evidence that there really was such a build-up of forces in Kent. It was found unequivocally that instead there was a much larger concentration of ships in the Portsmouth, Poole and Weymouth areas. The alleged staging area for the invasion of the Pas-de-Calais was devoid of significant ship movements and looked almost deserted compared to activity in the Portsmouth area

sen out.

On the German side, one should have concluded from this information that there was no deployment of Allied invasion forces in the

¹ Jak P. MALLMANN
SHOWELL, *German Naval
Code Breakers*, Jan Allan
2003, pp. 129-133.

room Kent and thus no invasion in the Pas-de-Calais threatened te. Weeks before the landing, Admiral HEYE showed the chief of the SS fighter units, Otto SKORZENY, a list of the naval experts who issued the probable landing sites, classified from 1 to 10 in probability. The landing took place on June 6 on the first three stretches of coast indicated.¹ However, as will be explained later, this did not fit into the concept of high-ranking circles of the German leadership, and great effort must have been made there to avoid the risk of invasion in the Pas -de Calais to suppress negative messages from the B service.

¹ Otto SKORZENY, *Meine Commando Companies*, Universitas, Munich 1993, p. 174.

A few days after the Allied landing, the B service also succeeded in deciphering the new Allied 'D-Day radio code'. The German code specialists were now able to read the daily and weekly reports from the top landing control officer in Normandy to his mother station. They were now informed about all the people who had arrived in France, the supply of ammunition and the transport of war material.

The B-Service immediately discovered and reported the bad consequences of the storm of June 19 for the Allies. However, he was not followed by a German counterattack on land to take advantage of the invading troops' ill-fated position. Questions arise again.

A complete picture of the strength of the Allied invasion forces in France had emerged from the Allied reports read along fairly promptly. If the German OKW had correctly assessed this knowledge, it should have led to the unambiguous finding that the main Allied landing on the continent had taken place in Normandy.

Secret Weapon Pressurized Sea Mines: End the invasion before it begins ...

"It must remain an unfathomable mystery for all time as to why the Seine Bay and with it the Normandy coastal waters were not already mined in June 1944...", wrote Helmut STUBNER, head of the Vienna Military History Research Institute in 2002.² In the In fact, it seemed as if the Germans, who were leaders in the development of sea mines during the Second World War, had suddenly forgotten all the rules of mine warfare. The one for the defense of Normandy was closed

² H. STUBNER,
The *Heinkel He-177*
Greiff combat aircraft,
Euro doc 2003, p. 246.

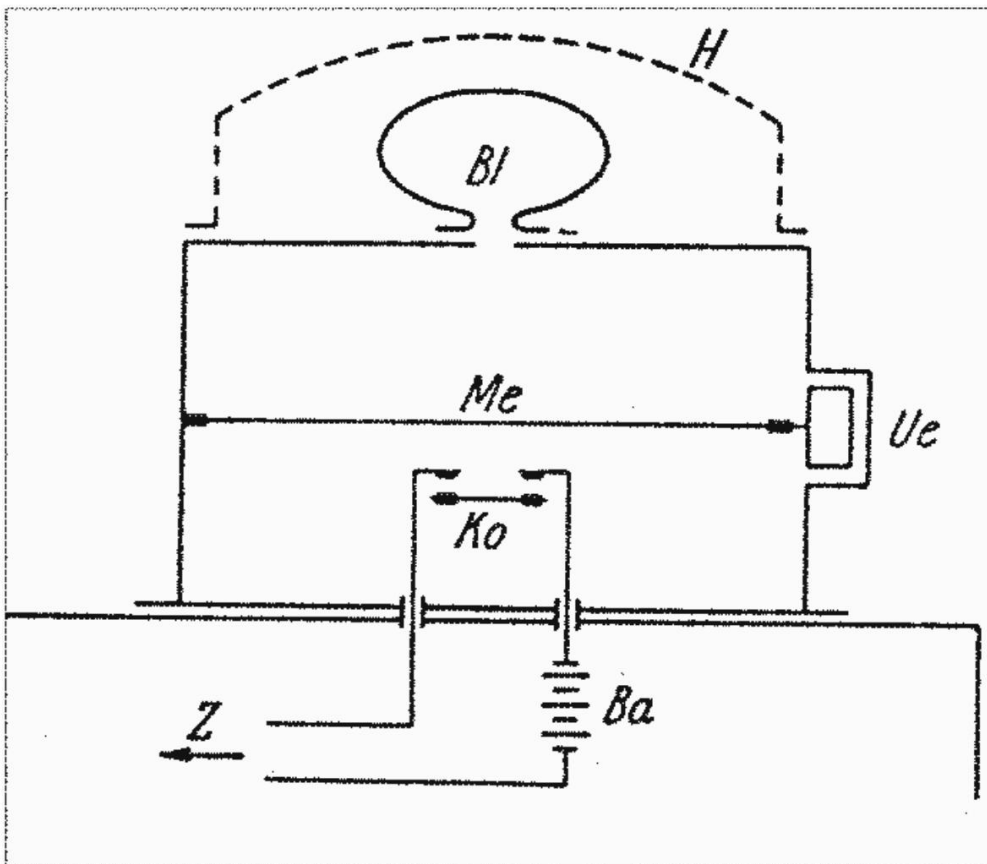
Permanent "Marine Group West" had a large number of minesweepers and R-boats at its disposal. Due to their regular deployments against the Allied mines on the sea routes, they were well trained and practiced.

For more than a year before the Allied landings, Naval Group West was of the opinion that nowhere was a landing more likely than on the Normandy coast between Cherbourg and Le Havre. After an offensive mine warfare against England with planes, speedboats and submarines could hardly be carried out sufficiently with the available forces due to the Allied defense in the last months before the Anglo-American landing, one had to prevent the expected invasion in Northern France nevertheless planned a large-scale deployment of new types of mines (pressure cells and coastal mines).¹

The pressure can mine was a long-distance detonation mine developed by the Navy in 1940. The ignition mechanism consisted of a rubber bag that served as an air reservoir through which the pressure surge of a ship's hull passing over it was applied to a dun

¹ Hans Jürgen WITTHÖFF, *Lexicon for the German Mari*

negeschichte, Vol.1, Köhler
1977, p. 78 and 208 ff.



Deadly danger for the invasion: functional principle of the pressure mine (according to LUSAR 1956).

"Used massively and in good time, the pressure mines could have caused devastating losses among the Allied fleets," claimed the English admiral RAMSAY.

ne aluminum membrane was passed. As soon as the surge of water pulled the rubber bag away from the membrane, an ignition circuit closed and detonated the explosive charge. This basic mechanism could also be combined with a second magnetic or acoustic detonator. The mine detonated after a slight change in water pressure of around 20 millimeters of water column underpressure caused by an overflowing ship. The pressure can mine was simple in construction, making it easy to replicate, but almost impossible to clear. In the Second World War, this was only possible with counter-blasts or direct overruns of the mines by 'loss ships' (e.g. barrier breaker).

However, the Germans hesitated for years before using this mine, which was available from the late summer of 1943, out of concern that it would be discovered by the enemy and the resulting danger of being copied.

After months of arguing about whether, when and how to use the unclearable aerosol mines, 'Group West' proposed that, with the invasion approach properly identified, the APS would be dropped from the Bristol Channel to the Humber using all available forces. 1 A ruthless mass deployment fourteen days before landing was expected to have a decisive effect in repelling the invasion.

However, it rejected the use of the Luftwaffe off its own coast, since the use of air mines made it difficult to hit the few shallow water areas off the coast and it would be better to contaminate the Navy with conventional mines.

When this proposal was also rejected, on April 25, 1944, the "West Group" again demanded the use of pressure can mines, since a reconnaissance report from Air Fleet 3 had clearly shown that the invasion fleet was forming up. During a conversation with GÖRING, HITLER had stated the day before that "the use of mines to control (the) enemy deployment(s) is desirable and can probably have a not inconsiderable effect." Nevertheless, this was rejected again on May 6, 1944 by DÖNITZ.

The use of pressure can mines suffered from the typical 'Normandie effect': no pressure cans had been deployed before landing. On June 7, 1944, the naval command then agreed to use the pressurized can mine. In certain circles, however, people obviously still believed they had all the time in the world, otherwise what followed can hardly be understood, because it was not until June 13, 1944 that representatives of Air Fleet 3 and the "West Group" discussed the one

1 Sönke NEITZEL, *The deployment of the German Air Force over the Atlantic and the North Sea 1939-45*, Bernard & Graefe, Bonn 1995, pp. 203-226.

set of the pressure can mine, which, after a further three days, was dropped from the air into the invasion waters on the night of June 16. Their deployment thus began nine days after the start of the landing operation.

The Kriegsmarine itself had already begun to 'seed' the new secret weapon on June 11th. S- and R-Boote laid more than 200 pressure mines by June 14, along with two Le Mans-based squadrons of mine-laying aircraft, which had apparently acted on their own before the official air-drops began.

Was this delay, fatal from a German point of view, a coincidence?

Large stocks of these mines - pressure, acoustic/pressure and magnetic/pressure - had been stored since production began in late 1943, including 2,000 in underground hangars at an airfield near Le Mans. In May 1944, however, the pressurized can mines already stored in France had been taken from their main depot in Le Mans to Magdeburg "to be safe here from sabotage actions." Due to the – foreseeable – chaotic traffic conditions after the start of the invasion, the Germans were not able to bring the mines back to France overnight. The order to move the pressure can mines back from France to Germany is said to have come from HITLER, but it would be interesting to find out - if this is true at all

–, which persons on the German side had applied for the return of this revolutionary weapon.

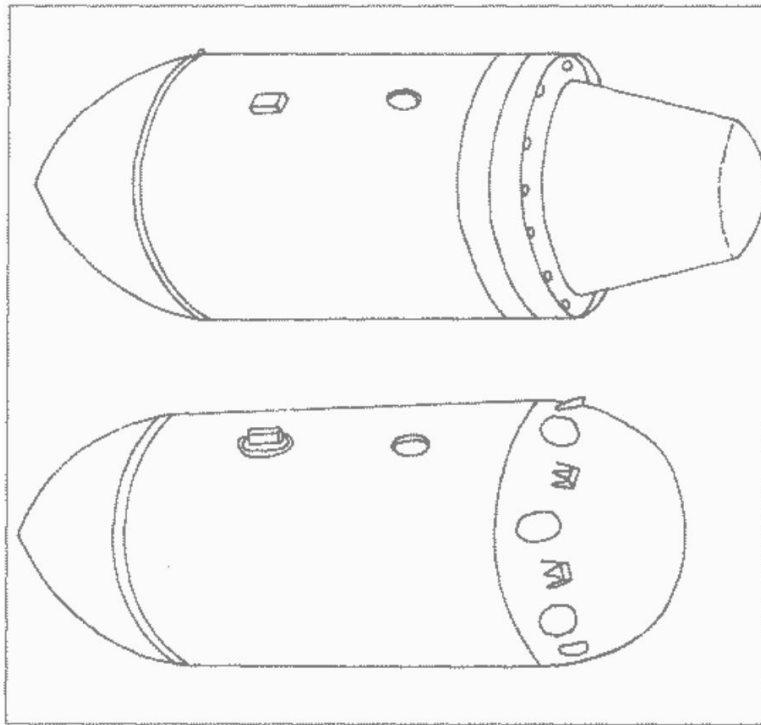
Airfield equipment, ammunition depots, pressure can mines, even entire fighter squadrons and tank units, the same method catches the eye again and again!

Finally, by 26 June 1944, 1421 BM 1000 mines with AD400 aerosol fuzes and 1445 Type B air mines with DM-1 aerosol fuzes had been dropped over the invasion waters. By June 21, 44 Allied ships had been sunk or damaged by mines (conventional and pressure mines).

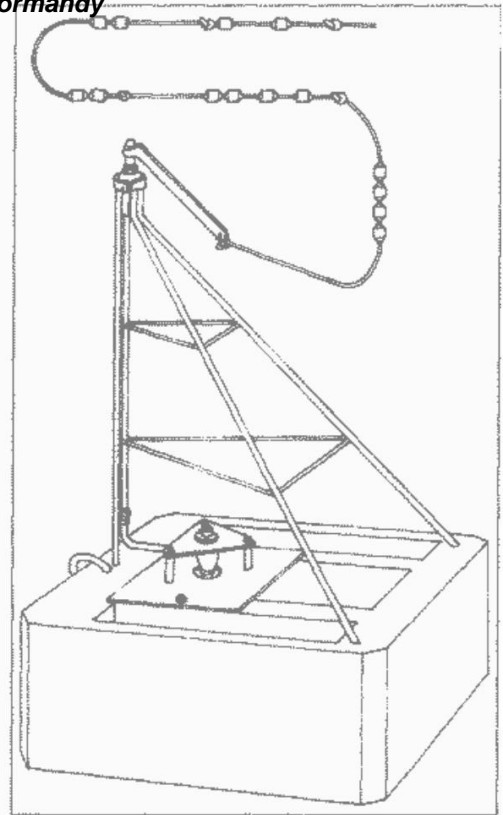
The new mines proved useful to the Allied invasion fleet the most effective threat - more dangerous than any other weapon of the Kriegsmarine. According to the English naval expert John CAMPBELL. 1, the timely use of the pressure can mine in Normandy could have ended the Allied landings before they even began.

On the one hand, the pressure can refills were only used at a time when the allied bridgeheads already firmly attached to the fran

1 John CAMPBELL, *Naval Weapons of world war two*, Conway 1985, pp. 269, 271 and 274.



Left: BM 1000 air mine,
dropping possible without a
parachute 3: Pressure mine
fuse on magnetic mine 4:
Pressure mine fuse on acoustic
mine.



Right: KMA-Beton ›Katie‹
coastal mine.

cesian coast were established. In addition, the Luftwaffe laid the bulk of its mines away from shipping routes, in deep water where they were almost ineffective. After the initial success of the German pressure can mine, the Allies quickly came up with the solution that the losses from pressure can mines could be kept down by strictly restricting the movement of ships in deeper water.

The British were amazed to find that the German Luftwaffe made no serious attempt to drop their dangerous pressure can mines into the shallow water areas where navigation restrictions were few benefited.

The Navy only participated in the mining of the Seine Bay with pressure can mines to a comparatively small extent, since the number of existing speedboats was small and the enemy defenses were extremely strong. The use of minesweepers and R-boats had become all but impossible after the start of the Allied landings in the invasion waters.

1 Gerhard HÜMMELCHEN,
*The German Schnellboote in
the Wide World War*, Mittler,
Hamburg 1996, p. 179.

2 Sönke NEITZEL, *The
deployment of the German
Air Force over the Atlantic
and the North Sea 1939-45*,
Bernard & Graefe, Bonn 1995, 5.233.

In addition, by mid-June 1944 the Navy had thrown 500 of the pressurized can mines assigned to it in the Dieppe-Somme area, which was not at risk, defensively and completely uselessly to protect against any further landing attempts, as well as a further 220 in front of the Scheidemündung.^{1, 2} The Allies were already at the June 20, 1944 the first pressurized can mines fell into the hands of two mines at Luc-sur-Mer ge

could be borrowed. Within 24 hours the mines were in England for inspection. However, the Allies did not learn which clearing method could be used against the pressure can mines. There weren't any back then! A mysterious incident had occurred on July 7, 1944, when two DM-1 pressure can mines had been thrown out of focus (!) by a German aircraft into the Orleans forest. After a long search, both mines were found, but in one case the pressure cell had been removed. Had someone deliberately played the mines in fuzzy form into the hands of the Resistance? Later, during the Allied advance, three railroad cars loaded with pressurized mines fell into Allied hands. On the way to the site in Le Havre, they got stuck in the railway chaos.

The coastal apron mines were specially developed for the local peculiarities of Normandy. They had been specially developed for the large tidal differences on the Channel coast and were intended to defend against light naval forces and landing craft. These were mines of the EMG, OMA (K), DMA (K) and KMA types. The KMA concrete ground mines in particular were available in large numbers in Le Havre and were to be laid in large numbers. For this purpose, however, only the mine-laying ships of the 2nd and 6th minesweeping flotillas were ordered to Cherbourg in the last few weeks before the invasion to lay large quantities of coastal mines in the Seine Bay.

It remains a mystery why other minesweeping flotillas were not used for the same purpose. Finally, due to the strong Allied air and sea presence, only a few ships arrived in Cherbourg, which meant that the action could not take place on the scale planned.

The Germans also failed to use the large quantities of conventional sea mines available to block the Seine Bay in good time before the start of the landing. The Germans had proved before that they had become a veritable master at blocking sea areas. From 1941 to 1944, the entire Soviet Baltic Sea fleet was trapped in the Kronstädter Bay by German mine barrages and thus condemned to inactivity. In Normandy, on the other hand, it was not even possible to secure the deep and shallow waters with mine barriers, although an Allied landing in Normandy had been firmly expected from the 'Naval Group West'. Although they began half-hearted, defensive minefields in a deeper zone in a 200-kilometer-wide

fen roughly in the middle of the English Channel from Boulogne to the Cotentin peninsula, but these fields lacked the necessary depth and concentration. In the first quarter of 1944, attempts had been made to lay ground and anchor rope mine barriers between Barfleur and the port entrance of Le Havre. By the end of April 1944, however, most of these mines had become ineffective. According to English sources, the ground mines were equipped with time fuses that turned off the fuse after a while (remarkably fast?), and many of the German anchor mines had since been cleared by the Allies.

Now there was another delay. In April 1944 both types of mine barriers should have been renewed, but sea mines were not available again until May 1944 and then only in limited numbers.¹ Were the Allied air raids on railway systems between Germany and France to blame, or were others to blame? Are your hands involved here? That was not all, because when it came to renewing the minefields, against the will of the commander of Naval Group West, Admiral KRANCKE, on the express orders of OB West, the coast east of Le Havre was first to be covered with mines been contaminated.

Despite all the preparations, the 'lightning barriers' in the threatened landing section never took place, and even on those after the Lan

¹ VE TARRANT, *The Last Year of the German Navy*, Podzun-Pallas, Wölfersheim-Berstadt 1996, pp. 41-45.

The chief of Marine Group Command West, Admiral Theodor KRANCKE, on an inspection trip in Fecamp, east of Le Havre.



Something was wrong with the mines used in the construction of the mines, because a large number of the mines laid by the Germans detonated in the Bay of the Seine "for unknown reasons" without contact with the enemy 102 self-detonations alone. Just a technical failure - or had someone helped here by sabotage?

A report¹ written by the German Air Force Command at the end of 1944, in which the most important war diaries, experience reports and studies were summarized, highlighted the omission of a large-scale contamination of the invasion waters with aerial mines as a major omission: »The mine contamination would have been a strategic measure . It should have been used long in advance where the enemy could be expected or where the coastal fortifications and troop occupations were weaker. A dense mine barrier would have affected the movement of transport and warships up to here. The accuracy of the Allied battleships against German ground troops in the battles for Caen would have been reduced, so the overall defense and the readiness for a counterattack would have been made easier." It was also pointed out that the Allied fleet, which would have had to be carried out with great effort, would have been an important indication of where the main focus of the landing action was to be expected.

¹ Paul CARELL, *they are coming! The invasion of 1944*, Ullstein, Berlin 1997, p. 214 f.

Whether this happened by accident, incompetence, or on purpose, will we shall return to in later chapters.

Holocaust of the ›greyhounds of the sea‹ or:

"The raid that saved the Normandy Invasion"

As early as June 3, 1944, at around 11:00 p.m., the command center of the ›FdS‹ (leader of the Schnellboote) received the message from Marine Group Command West in Paris that the Allied landing was to take place on the night of June 4 between Le Havre and Cherbourg . On June 5, "Alert Level 3" was ordered.²

At the time of the Normandy invasion, the German Schnellboote were the only offensive means to challenge unrestricted Allied naval supremacy.

The classic surface forces in the West were just as insignificant as the remnants of the U-boat fleet, they wanted to do something against the phalanx of the landing fleet.

² J.-P. DALLIES-LABOURDETTE, *Deutsche Schnellboote*, Motorbuch , Stuttgart 2006, p. 148.

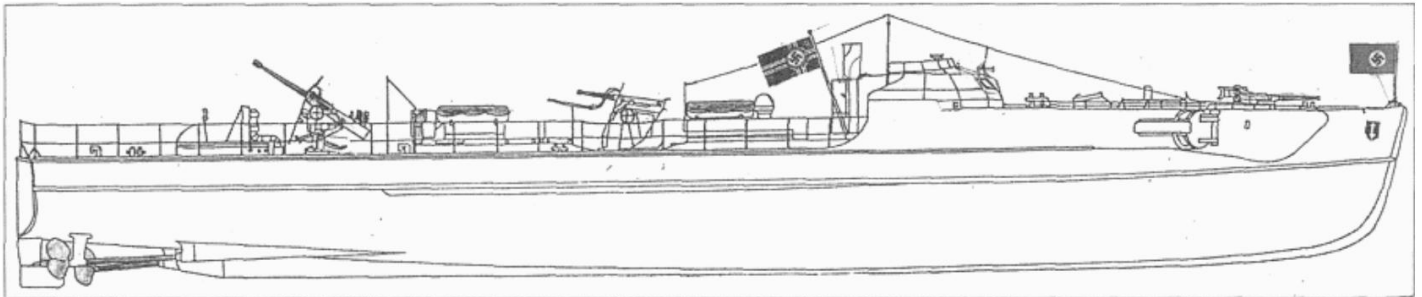
Throughout the Second World War, the German Schnellboote, also known as the "Greyhounds of the Seas", posed a constant threat to enemy shipping because of their high mobility and fighting power for the coastal zones and in the Channel. They tied down very strong enemy forces and came despite them constantly improved defensive measures by the Allies, again and again with lightning-fast attacks with impressive success. The backbone of the Schnellboot flotillas during the Normandy invasion was the

German S-100 class Schnellboot: According to British information they could have posed a threat to the invasion, but were knocked out by a major air raid on 14 June 1944.

Type S-100. It was produced from 1943 and was considered the best speedboat of its time. The S-100 type was a successful compromise between size, performance and fighting power with a large radius of action. It had an average length of 34.94 m, a width of 6.28 m and a height of 2.9 m. Its operational displacement was 110.74 tons.

A typical German attempt to meet the enemy's supremacy at sea and in the air with superior performance and quality.

Initially, three Daimler-Benz MB 511-V four-stroke diesels achieved this



The surviving boats were equipped with the secret weapon 'Dak kel' at the end of the Battle of Normandy. The range of this long-range torpedo was 57 kilometers.

Power packs of 2000 hp each (in later series three MB 501-A or MB 511 with a total of around 7500 hp power with mechanical supercharging) on top-speed propellers with a diameter of 1.1 or 1.23 m an outstanding speed of 43.5 knots, which could be briefly increased to 48 knots under operating conditions. The armament of the S-boats generally consisted of two torpedo tubes of 53.3 cm-TR, 34 reserve torpedoes or alternatively six sea mines.

At the end of May 1944, the 'FdS' (leader of the Schnellboote), Commander Rudolf PETERSEN, had the fourth flotilla (Boulogne) with eight boats, the fifth flotilla (Cherbourg) with five boats (plus four being repaired) and about the ninth flotilla (Cherbourg) with seven task boats.

By June 1944, these few Schnellboots were proving to be an increasingly painful thorn in the flanks of the Allied fleets. The allies were indeed through their break into the Enigma key

of the 'Fds' about most enemy S-boat trips and were therefore able to strengthen their own combat patrols in endangered areas and mine the expected approach routes of the German S-boats. But Commodore PETERSEN's 'greyhounds of the sea' proved increasingly in these night operations to be incredibly fast and highly manoeuvrable vessels that were difficult to engage and detect.

The Germans finally decided to concentrate the Schnellboote in the port of Le Havre.

During the night of 8/9 June, the fourth flotilla moved from Boulogne to Le Havre, and the berths that had become vacant in the bomb-proof S-boat bunkers at Boulogne were taken over by the second flotilla's express boats, which had been brought in from Ostend. Four days later the ninth flotilla was also transferred from Cherbourg to Le Havre as the Germans began blockading the port of Cherbourg against the threat of Allied invasion and demolishing port facilities to prevent Allied use of the port .



RUDOLF PETERSEN

This concentration of the three S-boat flotillas in Le Havre proved disastrous. On the afternoon of June 14, 1944, the order from "Luftflut 3" (General Field Marshal SPERRLE) arrived in Le Havre not to open anti-aircraft fire between 8:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.: For this time, an attack of three (! – Author's note) German combat aircraft with remote-controlled bombs of the type "Fritz X" against the concentration of Allied ships in the Seine estuary and Le Havre intended as an approach area. Admiral KRANCKE, the OB Marine West, tried in vain to revoke the order, since his speedboats were constantly threatened by Allied air forces due to the immediate vicinity of the landing area.

Those responsible at 'Air Fleet 3' reacted with arrogance and stuck to their orders. The flak kept their shooting ban! In fact, planes then flew in via Le Havre, but they weren't the ones announced! While the admiral was still on the phone with the headquarters of 'Air Fleet 3', a powerful British air raid began.

General EISENHOWER reported in the post-war period: "It was the RAF Bomber Command's largest daily operation since the outbreak of war." Exactly at 8 p.m., at the beginning of the anti-aircraft barrage, 325 "Lancaster" bombers appeared over Le Havre and threw, only through light anti-aircraft guns molested by the speedboats, theirs in low flight

bomb load off. The bombers attacked in three waves: In the first wave 'Mosquitos' dropped flares on the concrete bunkers, which were then attacked by 22 'Lancaster' bombers with 5 ton 'Tall boy' bombs. Several hits were made, but only one penetration was achieved. The second wave, ten Mosquitos as target markers and 209 Lancasters, followed at the foot of the first, while the 110 Lancasters of the third wave attacked in the twilight.

With no fighter or anti-aircraft defenses except for the light anti-aircraft guns in the harbor (which a Lancaster shot down), the RAF heavy bombers were able to attack the harbor with great accuracy. Although the district of Notre-Dame near the port was still badly hit by misses, most of the 1,230 tons of bombs fell as planned in the port area. There, 20 minesweepers and picket boats, 19 tugboats, 3 torpedo boats ('Falke', 'Jaguar' and 'Möwe') and 14 S-boats were sunk. In addition, another speedboat was badly damaged, and the casualties among the crews were also high.

Among them was Captain Lieutenant JOHANNSEN, commander of the 5.8 boat flotilla. Only one S-Boot (S167) survived the attack in Le Havre operational. This was the greatest success the Allies ever had against the German Schnellboote.

It is completely unclear why the S-boats were not in their bunkers at the time of the attack. Nothing would have happened to them there.

Sunk or damaged ships lying transversely prevented the remaining units from leaving the port.

The background to the attack was that the Allied High Command was aware that the greatest danger to the invasion fleet came from the German torpedo and Schnellboote concentrated in Le Havre. The Allied Navy Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Sir Bertram Home RAMSAY, therefore demanded that the Commander-in-Chief of Bomber Command, RAF Air, Chief Marshall Arthur HARRIS, smoke out this troublesome wasp's nest. The Allies were well informed by Enigma reports that the S-boats would not set out from Le Havre because of the weather conditions that day, and reconnaissance officers from 542 Squadron at RAF Benson showed that there were indeed numerous ships and S-boats in Le Havre lay.

Admiral KRANCKE described the effects of this RAF air attack as a "disaster" and noted the next morning in the War diary: "It will hardly be possible to

The naval situation in the Bay of Seine has changed completely since yesterday's attack on Le Havre.' reduced (one in Le Havre, four in Boulogne and five in Ostend).

Although the remaining Schnellboote continued to try to seal off the bridgeheads, their reduced numbers prevented further success for the remainder of June.

After that, further speedboat flotillas were formed from the eastern area transferred to the Normandy area, but they came too late to be able to exert any significant influence on what was happening. On the night of September 3rd and 4th, the last speedboats left the English Channel!

As late as 1993, British sources referred to the attack on Le Havre as "The Raid that saved the Normandy Invasion". This means that the Normandy invasion was in serious danger of failing if the German Schnellboote had not been eliminated.¹⁻⁴

The strange circumstances under which this victory was achieved 'at the right time' raise the question of whether there was any assistance from the German side. Similar circumstances also existed during the British major attack on Peenemünde in August 1943, except that this time the timing between the Allies and German helpers seemed to have worked even more perfectly.

It would be interesting to find out why the S-boats in Le Havre were not in their bunkers as usual on the evening of the attack and who was responsible for the fateful order to cease anti-aircraft fire at Luftwaffe 3.

Did the attack by three guided missile aircraft against the landing fleet at Cherbourg on June 14 actually exist? When it really later became important to protect the German aircraft from their own anti-aircraft fire during a decisive action, those responsible in the Luftwaffe behaved completely differently: On January 1, 1945, during the large-scale attack on the Allied airfields (› Operation Bodenplatte‹) the Luftwaffe fighter squadrons fly without batting an eyelid over the massive anti-aircraft belts of the German V-Weapons in Holland, which were not previously informed. Over a hundred German fighter planes were lost in their furious defensive fire. This ›mistake‹ caused a large part of the Germans

1 VE TARRANT, *The Last Year of the German Navy*, Podzun-Pallas, Wölfersheim-Berstadt 1996, pp. 68-73.

2 Gerhard HÜMMELCHEN, *The German Schnellboote in the Second World War*, Mittler, Hamburg 1996, p. 175 f.

3 Janusz PIEKALKIEWICZ, *Invasion. France 1944*, South West, Munich 1979, p. 153 f.

4 Alastair REVIE, ... was a lost bunch. *The Story of the Bomber Command der Royal Air Force 1939-1945*, Motorbuch, Stuttgart 1974, p. 321.

Losses at "Bodenplatte" that could never be compensated for. The officers, who have remained unknown to this day, used "secrecy" as the alleged reason for not informing their own flak.

The second attack on the Le Havre speedboats

Even after the bombing disaster of June 14, 1944, the few operational German Schnellboote remained the only available fast warships capable of reaching the Seine Bay. Already on June 19, 1944, the 2.

The Schnellboot flotilla had been transferred to the hard-hit port and from there had begun successful operations in the invasion sector.

In the early morning of July 5, 1944, the 2nd Speedboat Flotilla returned from one of these missions. All crews were happy when the boats reached Le Havre at 4:00 a.m. It was a bright full moon night. When the boats entered the port of Le Havre, only about 100 meters from the bunker of the Räumboot

When they were far away, its midsection suddenly blew up in a massive explosion. The 41 battle-ready torpedoes stored in the torpedo control center had exploded for "unknown cause". The explosion ripped out all the partitions of the massive structure.

Smaller explosions from additional artillery ammunition exploded for another three hours. Around 5:00 a.m. calm returned and when the fire was out it was found that none of the 2nd Flotilla's vital boats had been damaged in the blast. The cause of the 'accident', which caused some personnel losses among members of the Navy, was traced back to sabotage. Those in the back were never caught.¹ The loss of the torpedo depot had a severely negative impact on the use of the Schnellboote against the invasion.

¹ Gerhard HÜMMELCHEN, *The German Schnellboote in the Second World War*, Mittler, Hamburg 1996, p. 180.

Small ordnance - too late and without prepared bases

In the first days of the landing, the Allied capital ships were to be attacked on a broad front at night by the German K-combat units. The aim was to reduce the effectiveness of the ship's guns, which were often fatal to the German coastal defenders.

Here, too, things should be different.

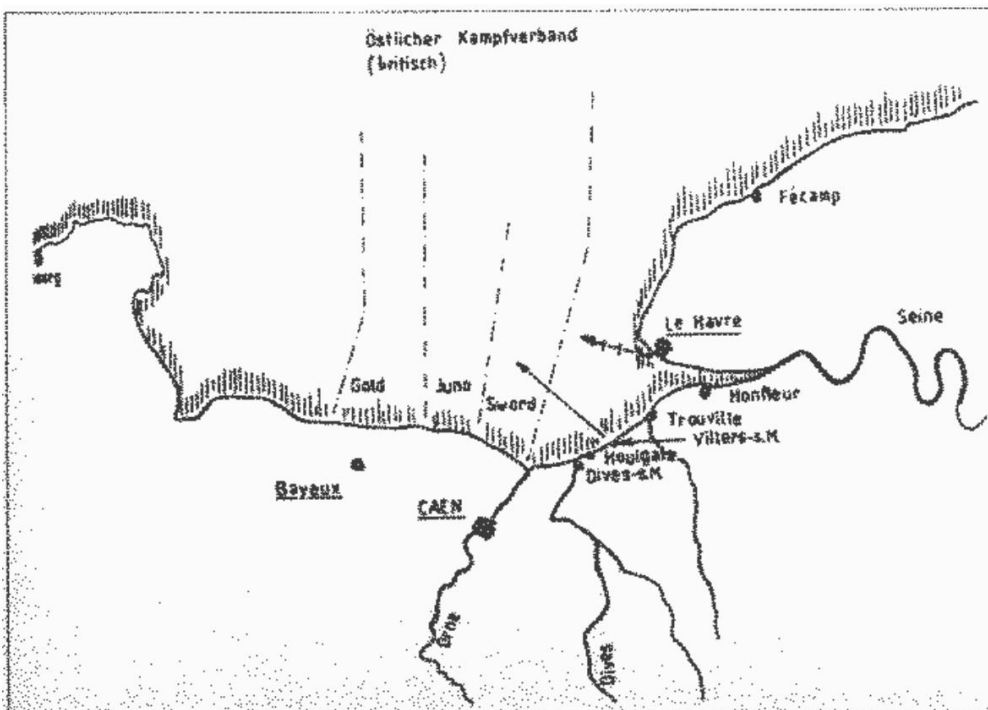
In view of the total Allied superiority in the area of surface forces, HITLER placed great hopes in the use of the new German K-weapons. One-man torpedoes and explosive boatmen should turn the tide.

However, the use of the new revolutionary means of struggle was only possible after careful preparation. All technical, material and personnel problems could be solved in time before the invasion! However, precise coordination with the army was necessary, which would have to allocate the area of operation to the new K-flotilla.

This is where the 'Normandy Effect' set in again. Otto SKORZENY wanted to use Admiral HEYE's "List of Endangered Coast Sections" to move small K-units to the endangered stretches of coast in good time. Normandy was at the forefront here and would have been provided with K-groups first. However, the 'High Command West' refused.¹ So it happened that the K flotillas were only sent to

France after the successful landing. Instead of using the entire landing section, they could only be launched from a limited area between Houlgate and Trouville and near Le Havre. For reasons of range (18 to 105 m), they were only able to operate in the 'Sword' landing sector in particular; the American sectors were inaccessible to the lone fighters of the seas. Instead of as planned and possible at the beginning of the landing, the "one-man torpedoes" and explosives came

1 Otto SKORZENY,
We fought, we lost,
Vol. 2, Helmut Cramer,
31975, p. 14 f.



The attacks of the K flotillas in the Bay of Seine (July/August 1944) were only directed against the British task force of the invasion fleet, especially in the Sword landing sector. The equipment was launched near Villers-sur-Mer, between Houlgate and Trouville. The opposing defense could easily adapt to this.

1 Gerhard BRACKE, *Die Einzelkämpfer der Kriegsmarine, Motorbuch, Stuttgart 1981, pp. 97-242*

boats were mainly used in July/August 1944, when the military decision on land had long been made,¹

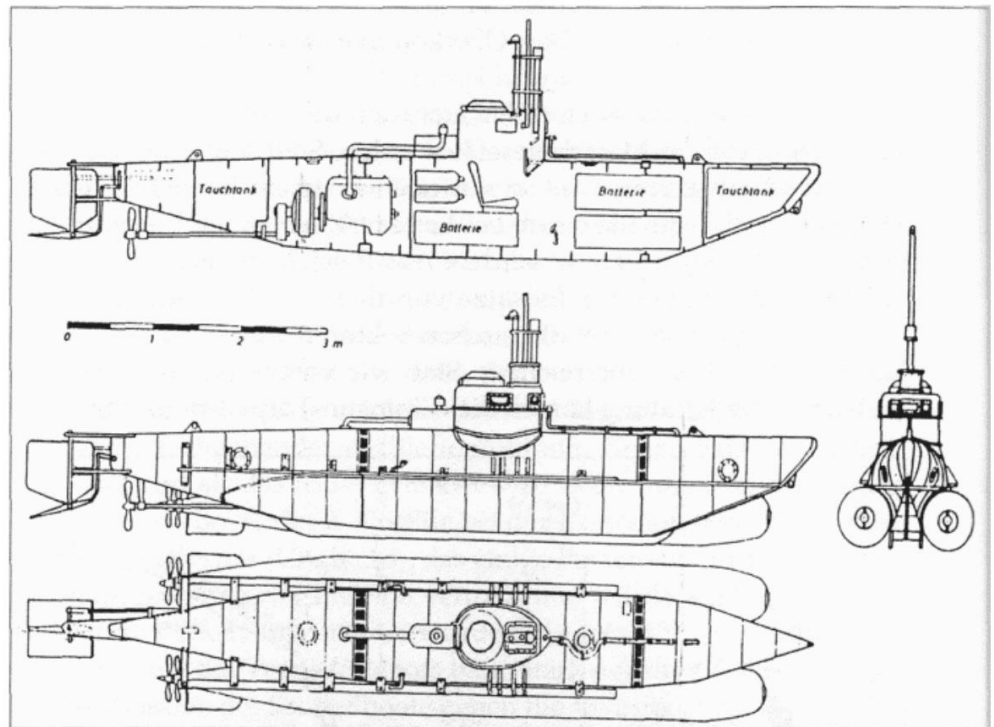
As a result, Admiral HEYE's small combat units were deployed under the most difficult conditions and very late. In their desperation, some of them deliberately exceeded the range of their special weapons in order to get to the enemy, although they voluntarily renounced their own return and thus almost certainly faced death.

Only very few of the volunteer crews of one-man torpedoes, small submarines or explosive boats may have known that they owed their adverse operating conditions to their own "Oberkommando West" to a large extent.

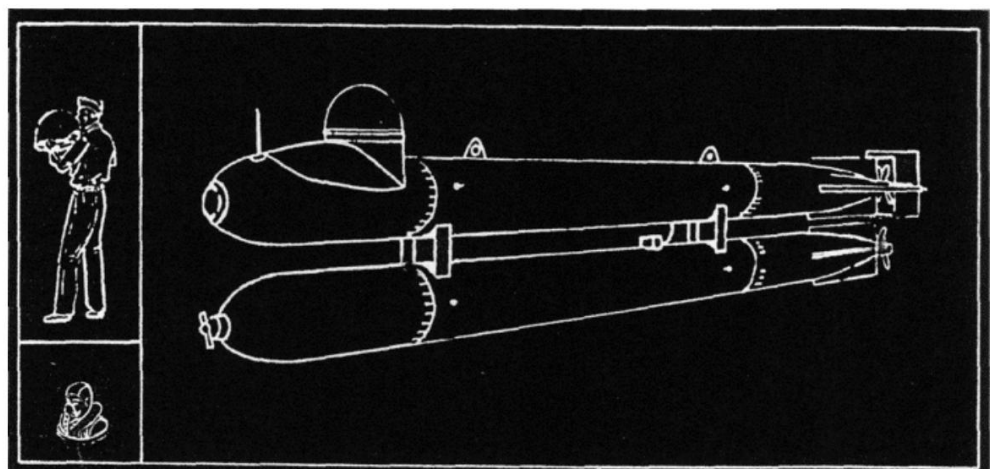
One-man submarine "Biber"

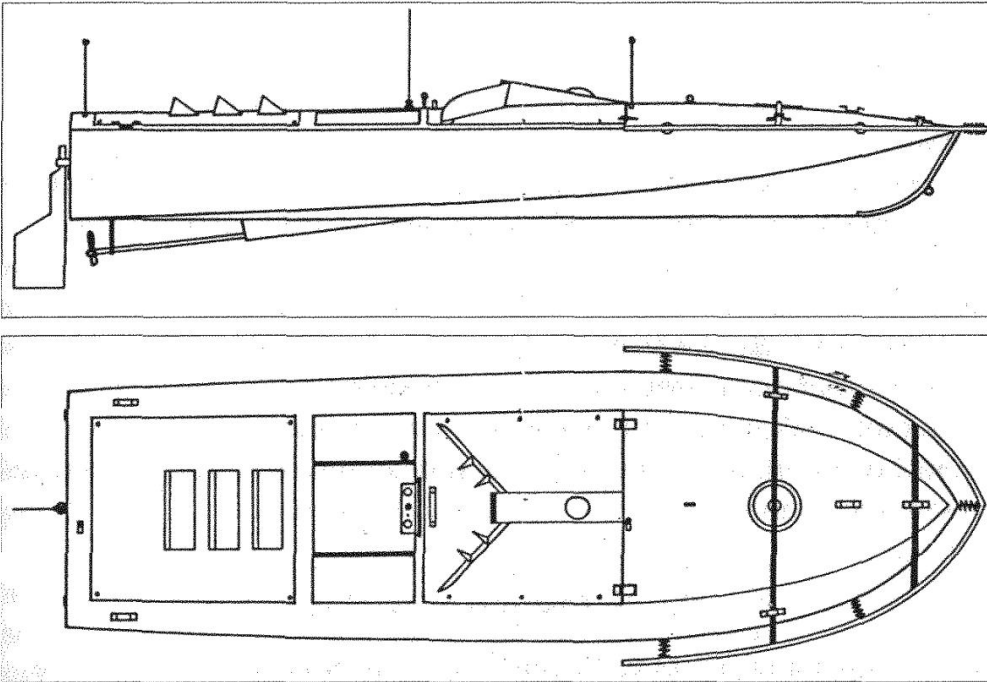
The first and only operation with 18 boats (K F1.261) against the invasion fleet took place in the night from 29 to 30

August in Fécamp. All boats returned from the operation without casualties. The very next day all the 'beavers' had to be destroyed during the evacuation of Fécamp.



Manned one-man torpedo 'Neger/Marder' in service between Houlgate and Trouville from July 5, 1944. Withdrawn from Normandy after initial successes due to heavy casualties.





German explosive boat, type 'Linse'.

According to former crew members, 500 explosive boats "Linsen" could have jeopardized the landing on June 6, 1944. Although available at home, not a single "lens" lay in wait on June 6, 1944!

The "lenses" were only used in small numbers from June 26 without their boat trailers (to be used from the beaches), which had been requested in good time. To do this, they had to be lowered into the water by cranes in Le Havre and towed with difficulty by R-boats close to Allied ships. Their actual successes are still controversial today.

Even if the German side was able to achieve some initial successes against the Allied invasion fleets with the relatively few devices that were really deployed hastily and in unfavorable places, every small-scale naval weapon can only ever bring certain momentary and detailed successes. Could this have made the difference on D Day?

Conclusion on the behavior of the Navy in the Normandy invasion

The facts described above force the conclusion that General **EISENHOWER's** helpers also had branches in the Navy. In fact, the reference work, *Rebellion of Conscience*, mysteriously writes about the military resistance against HITLER and the NS regime in 1933/45 that some older, sensible officers in high ranks were able to do so after July 20, 1944, during the war

1 Thomas VOGEL (ed.),
Rebellion of Conscience,
Mittler, Hamburg 2001, p.
305.

to protect marine affected fringe figures of the conspiracy as inconspicuously as effectively.¹

It is precisely these alleged "marginal figures" of the direct assassination that are of particular interest here, as they are in the Luftwaffe. It would come as no surprise to anyone if some of them were involved in the 1944 naval counter-invasion efforts in the Canal area.

An incident reported by Lieutenant Commander Hanno KRIEG, head of K-F1.361, shows that these forces continued to be active undetected until the end of the war. When Hanno KRIEG was in Admiral HEYES's headquarters at the beginning of 1945, the Allied propaganda station reported details of the strictest confidentiality the next day, which could only have been known to the five participants in the meeting in the room.²

2 Gerhard BRACKE, *The lone fighters of the navy*, Motorbuch, Stuttgart 1981, p. 287.

Dept. 2: Fortress without a roof

»Thus HITLER suspected z. B. that my officers were making certain efforts to change the leadership of the Reich – perhaps not entirely unjustly.« (Reich Marshal Hermann GÖRING in 1946 in Nuremberg to Hermann BROSS, his defense attorney's assistant)³

3 Werner BROSS,
Conversations with Göring,
Nuremberg 1946, p. 216.

The German Luftwaffe's comprehensive plans for an air battle over the landing area

The Luftwaffe command had placed great hopes in using the Luftwaffe against the invasion.

Even the commander-in-chief of the Allied tactical air fleets, Air Marshal LEIGH-MALLORY, had reckoned with at least 1,000 to 1,800 German sorties on the day of the invasion and did not rule out an extensive air battle over the landing area.

This was exactly what was planned in the plans of the OKL (High Command of the Air Force). From December 6, 1943, an air deployment plan was drafted in the West under the keyword 'Imminent Danger West'. The last version of the plan on February 27, 1944 says: »... the combined deployment of all flying formations, especially in the first hours of a landing, can be decisive for the outcome of the entire operation. During this time, the use of the Luftwaffe cannot be massed enough«. So the importance of having an air force deployed at the time of the invasion was well understood.

In order to reinforce the weak 3rd Air Fleet in France, the following was planned: two bomb squadrons and two fighter squadrons, four fighter squadrons and two battle squadrons, additions from other fronts in the event of an invasion (Reich territory, eastern front in Italy, south-eastern area): four reconnaissance squadrons, three bomb squadrons with nine groups, one battle squadron with two groups (Luftflotte 2), four fighter squadrons with 17 fighter groups and two night fighter squadrons with seven groups (Luftflotte Reich). This would have been a formidable force to be thrown at the Western Allies.¹ In the spring of 1944 the Luftwaffe had repeatedly shown that it was still a force to be reckoned with. If these plans had come to fruition, they would have jeopardized the success of the Normandy invasion.

¹ Olaf GROEHLER,
 History of the Luftwaffe
 GDR Military Publishing
 House, East Berlin 1981, p. 421 f

In fact, on May 31, 1944, the 'Air Fleet 3' in France had only 156 fighter planes and 73 bombers! Here, too, the "Normandy Effect" was to ensure that not a single one of the promised reinforcement aircraft appeared over the Cotentin peninsula on the day of the invasion.

Despite the threat of a landing, parts of the "3rd Air Fleet" had been transferred to southern France and Czechoslovakia on May 17.

Stopped at the crucial moment: the Luftwaffe attacks on the invasion ports

In the spring of 1944, in connection with Operation Steinbock, a small number of German fighter planes were used again and again against the British ports of embarkation.

On the night of April 26, 1944, 193 German fighter planes attacked a concentration of ships off Portsmouth in two waves. Because of the bad weather, however, they were unsuccessful. The following night this attack was repeated by 78 warplanes dropping aerial mines and heavy bombs. And on April 29, 1944, 58 German aircraft again attacked Portsmouth. On the night of April 30, 101 German fighter planes were scraped together to bomb the port of Plymouth. This time it was possible to cause major damage to the port facilities and ships. May 1944 saw further German attacks against ship concentrations in the southern English ports. It succeeded in hitting a number of those ships that were to take part in the invasion. So, on May 16, 1944, 106 combat aircraft took off

to Portsmouth, one of the main ports of the invasion force.

Portsmouth was attacked again on May 23, 1944 with 104 aircraft. On May 27th, 66 aircraft 'Weymouth' were launched, while on May 29th 1944 the port of Torquay was attacked by 65 night bombers. On the night of May 30, 51 German bombers set course for the port of Falmouth. This was the last German attack on a port by the Western Allied invasion forces.¹

¹ Gerd SUDHOLT U.

Franz KUROWSKI, *So was the Second World War in 1944*, Druffel, Berg 1994, p. 269 f.

In the last six days before the invasion, however, no more German air raids were flown, although they would have offered the best chance of destroying ships and the embarked troops. From today's perspective, it's amazing why the Luftwaffe didn't use everything they still had at their disposal here.

Password ›Imminent Danger West‹

The Luftwaffe is coming (not)

On the day of the invasion, the German Luftwaffe proved incapable of exerting any decisive influence on the course of events. In the crucial first 24 hours, the Anglo-American tactical and strategic air forces flew 14,674 sorties, compared to 319 by the Germans. That was just over 2 percent of the opponent's bets. Allied air supremacy was complete. So it was inevitable that both the enemy and our own troops would ask where the Luftwaffe was going. In the early summer of 1944, the German Air Force was weakened, but it was still there and, as the British and British aircrews could confirm from their flights into Reich territory, it was still an enemy to be taken seriously. Where was she now?

The United Press,
London, reported on June 6th
June 1944: 'The pilots of
the fighter-bombers who
flew over the invasion area
in the late morning report
that they had not
encountered any resistance
in the air; not a single
German plane showed up.'[«]

The German supreme leadership proceeded from the correct knowledge that the invasion must be repelled immediately or at the latest within the first ten days. If that was not possible, it must finally be considered a success. A timely transfer and immediate intervention by the German Air Force were therefore urgently required. At the keyword "threatening danger west" all formations of the Reich defense with the exception of two squadrons for bad weather operations and the destroyer, i.e. a total of about 600 aircraft, were to be thrown into the operational area of the invasion. For this purpose, 50 percent of the formations had been ordered to support fighter-bombers for low-level attacks

to keep the army prepared. If necessary, however, the fighters should engage 100 percent in ground combat. Night fighters were to attack the landing fleet at dawn with bombs and shipboard weapons.

A transfer staff had been deployed weeks before the start of the landing, which had to make all the preparations. Feeder places had been selected, prepared and stored for the individual associations. But until the end there were rearrangements that forced a complete switch to command airfields that were quickly set up. In addition, part of the equipment stored at the air bases in France had already been relocated back to the Reich - allegedly because the equipment was urgently needed there. A reason could always be found with impunity, it seemed.

According to General Adolf GALLAND, then commander of the German Jagdwaffe, in the evening hours of June 5, 1944, the Allied Air Forces were preparing to attack. However, no cues were given, but after the Commander-in-Chief West had assessed the situation, the main landing was taken for a diversion or a secondary operation.¹ The Luftwaffe had been alerted all the way up to

Norway during the night. There even courier flights to Paris planned for the early morning of June 6 were canceled "because of the invasion of France".² However, for the whole of June 6 the west remained inactive in the transfer of reserves – "keep your nerves" (again) the motto of the officers in charge.

A lot of time was lost completely unnecessarily and the keyword output was delayed. Finally, according to GALLAND, the Air Force acted on its own initiative and initiated the relocation itself. The transfer of the units of the Reich Defense and the Reserve did not begin until June 7th and 8th, 1944. By June 8th, 1944, Air Fleet 3 in France had only 80 operational fighters. But instead of the approximately 600 planes that General GALLAND wanted to have flown to the west, only 200 fighters left the Reich, and on June 20, another 100 followed. The X. Fliegerkorps received 45 Ju 88 torpedo planes and the IX. Fliegerkorps 90 bombers additionally subordinated.³

The planned transfer of most of the night fighters to France did not come about at all, instead the night fighters were constantly and pointlessly transferred back and forth between Holland and the Reich.⁴

1 Adolf GALLAND, *The First and the Last, Fighter Pilots in the Second World War*, Schneekluth, Munich 1970, pp. 300-304.

2 Information Theo MÜNZ to the author.

3 Matthew COOPER, *Die Luftwaffe 1933-1945*, Motorbuch, Stuttgart 1988, p. 349 ff.

4 Gebhard ADERS, *History of the German Night jagd*, Motorbuch, Stuttgart 1977, p. 252 f.

The circumstances under which the westward transfers took place were highly unusual. Despite thorough preparations, they claimed unusually high casualties due to extreme haste and nervousness. The intermediate landing sites were overcrowded. Repeatedly the formations' destination airfields had to be changed during the flight, that is, because the planned airfield had been made unusable at the last moment, perhaps by an air raid. The advance detachments seldom met the main body. In any case, larger parts of each group remained behind in the Reich. This was not originally intended either. The individual hunting groups were completely torn apart.

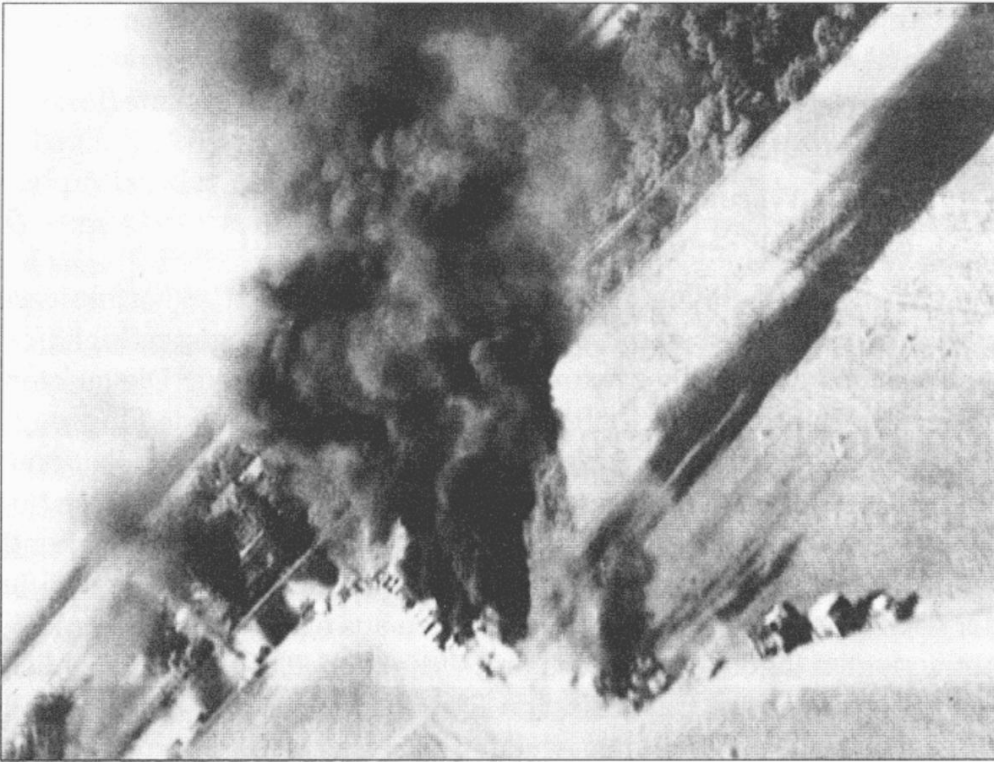
The leadership in the Reich knew neither where the formations were, nor whether they had even arrived, what strength they had and what they were lacking. Almost half of the squadrons got into dogfights during the transfer, suffered casualties or, being scattered and often aimless, did not find their destinations.

When it came to coordinating the long-established transfer of the units for the defense of the Reich to France, the II Jagdkorps under General JUNCK lacked any overview and failed completely.

Strikingly, the German fighter forces had been concentrated north and northwest of Paris, and not near the invasion front at camouflaged field airfields as originally intended.

From the new berths, the invasion combat area could just about be reached within the radius of action of the German fighters, but the approach always had to be from the flank. This made it easier for the Allied leadership to offensively monitor the German fighter accommodation area and to intercept the German fighter units on their approach. Thus, the bulk of dogfights over this area took place far from the invasion space. If the Germans succeeded in penetrating the airspace above the landing strip at all, they did so only in its eastern part, while the western, American part remained almost unmolested by German fighter flights. Cherbourg lay outside the German radius of operations altogether. So the German planes were forced to cover about the same approach distance as the enemy formations based in England. On the other side, however, it was already possible on August 8th.

On June 19, 1944, Anglo-American fighter-bombers began using the first field airfield, and by June 19 all Allied fighter-bombers were already operating from airfields in the



Allied air superiority was a key factor in the German defeat in Normandy. Here a fighter-bomber attack on a German supply column.
From: Janusz PIEKALKIEWICZ, *Invasion*.

France 1944, Southwest, Munich 1979.

Normandy off. On the German side, the ideal deployment of fighters would have been south of the invasion coast. It was still in German hands, but allegedly no fighters could be accommodated there because of "terrain difficulties" and because the few available places were "completely taken up".

Abundant many coincidences have the effect of the German Reduced anti-fighter defense in June/July 1944.

Despite being outnumbered by up to 20:1, the German fighter pilots fought the invasion battle with the courage of desperation.

By the end of June, 998 single-engine fighters managed to be transferred to France. By then 230 German pilots had been killed. 551 German fighters were shot down, 65 destroyed and another 290 damaged. But despite all the difficulties, German fighter pilots managed to take down 526 Allied planes in the same period. Among them were 203 P 47s. Fighter Squadron 26 in particular, which had meanwhile been moved back to the invasion area, proved to be a stubborn opponent. Several pilots get multiple kills in one day. For example, on June 8, 1944, Lieutenant Wilhelm HOFMANN, commander of the 8th/JG 26, achieved aerial victories over three US fighters in the Caen area, and "Addi" BLONZ, commander of the 6th/JG 26,

1 John WEAL, *Focke-Wulf FW 190 Aces of the Western Front*, Osprey Air-craft of the Aces No.9, Osprey 1998, p. 72 ff.

two days later shot down three P 47s in two and a half minutes north of Lisieux.¹ What would have happened if "they" hadn't moved Jagdgeschwader 26 out of the fighting area before the invasion?

Why weren't the alternate airfields in the landing area expanded?

2 Adolf GALLAND, *The First and the Last. Fighter pilots in World War II*, Schneekluth, Munich 1953, p. 306.



Hugo SPERRLE
(1885-1953).

During post-war interrogations, the general of fighter pilots, Adolf GALLAND, complained bitterly that the alternative and transfer airports in the invasion area were completely inadequate. Crucial supplies such as petrol, ammunition, food and water were either not available or only available to a very limited extent. This led to the fact that not even half of the fighter squadrons that had been transferred there from the Reich area according to plans drawn up long in advance were actually ready for action. In fact, some of the equipment stored at French airfields in case of an invasion had been returned home.

The commander-in-chief of 'Air Fleet 3', Field Marshal Hugo SPERRLE, justified the neglect of this vital task with a lack of personnel. This seems incomprehensible, since the OKL (High Command of the Air Force) had already described the provision of suitable field airports as an integral part of its general plan when drawing up its anti-invasion plans at the beginning of 1944. The 'Air Fleet 3' had also not pointed out that, in their opinion, it was impossible to provide sufficiently developed field airports for the squadrons to be transferred from the defense of the Reich to France, but the formations transferring to France were actually allowed to fall into the trap.

General SPERRLE's post-war justification is not convincing on its own: at the time of the invasion there were 400,000 Luftwaffe personnel in France to support 891 aircraft.³ General Adolf GALLAND himself was twice until the fall of Paris

for several days with the air force units in the west. His impressions were shocking, because in addition to the bleak external conditions, the German air force units in the West were largely in turmoil internally. General GALLAND writes

3 Donald CALDWELL, *The SC 26 War Diary*, Vol. 2: 1943-1945, Grub Street 1998, p. 354.

telling that "this disruption came from the constant struggle against the massive Allied superiority", but also from "all the other burdens that the war brought with it at this stage for every German made these weeks the most difficult ordeal of the the hunting weapon has ever been subjected to«. Unfortunately, General GALLAND did not detail these disruptions and stresses. However, it appears that when his book *The First and the Last* was published in 1953 he could not or did not want to dare to explain this in more detail, but nevertheless wanted to leave some information for posterity.¹

Conclusion: During the invasion, the Allies had the air and water monopoly. Neither the Navy nor the Luftwaffe were present on June 6th. In the decisive days that followed, both arms reacted well below their potential, despite thorough preparation for the event of a landing.

Even if some of this may be related to the state of affairs, which had been weakened by the many years of war, far too many other facts can no longer be explained by mere coincidences.

The Wehrmacht and SS felt let down by the Luftwaffe and Navy relaxed because they had to fight alone against the Allied air-land-naval power. Wrongly so, because the Dagger of Treason had wings and flippers!

How the use of self-sacrifice against the invasion fleet was prevented

German Kamikaze pilots came very close to being deployed in Normandy. In view of their own material inferiority, parts of the OKL had planned to use self-sacrificing Focke-Wulf FW 190 F-8 aircraft to keep Allied battleships away from shelling the positions of the Atlantic Wall.

For this purpose, aircraft loaded with 1400 kg anti-tank bombs were to dive into selected major enemy targets. A single PD-1400 had been shown to take out a battleship, and Hitler calculated that if four or five battleships were lost, the Allied fleet would withdraw.² This would have been the end of the invasion.

Right from the start this was replaced by the 5/KG 200 ›Leonidas‹-Squadron self-sacrifice deployment of essential parts to be carried out

¹ Professor MESSERSCHMITT's financial expert, a leading banker at the Munich bank ›Wilhelm Seiler & Co‹, then

confirmed the existence of a widespread conspiracy in the

Reich Air Ministry. It could not be clarified by the

end of the war (see: Paulus VON OBBERGEN, ›Invasion 1944‹, in: *Die Grenzmark*, volume 7-9/ 1962, p. 13). The

banker was probably the former director of the

Reichsbank, who was arrested after July 20, 1944, Dr. Otto SCHNIEWIND acted. After the war was

he was first head of the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau 'and later chairman of the supervisory board at 'Commerzbank«.

² However, HITLER did not believe in the planned use of self-sacrificing pilots.

1 Günther W. GELLER
MANN, *Moscow calls*
Army Group Center,
Bernard & Graefe, Bonn
1988, pp. 42-56.

was fiercely opposed by the Luftwaffe.¹ Thus, the development of the originally planned glide bombs was thwarted by high-ranking officers in the Luftwaffe. It was therefore necessary to fall back on the emergency solution with the super-heavy FW 190.

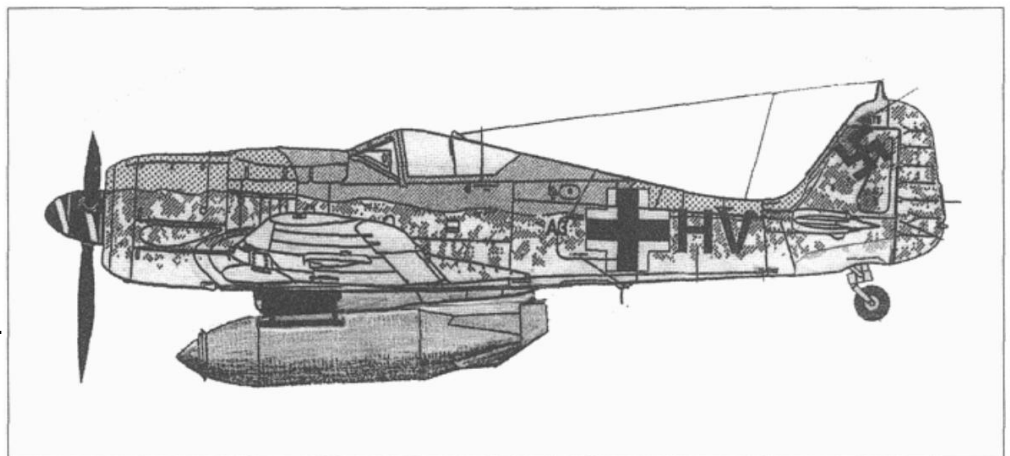
A major operational problem for self-sacrifice pilots was that almost all of the volunteers were glider pilots, but not motor pilots. When time was of the essence after June 6, 1944, it was suggested that motor pilots who had already been trained should be used instead of gliders. There were plenty of these available. However, on June 13, 1944, the commodore of KG 200, Colonel HEIGL, gave the order by telephone from Paris to begin training the glider pilots immediately. This made it clear that operational readiness could only be expected after several weeks. This played into the hands of the invading forces.

On June 15, 1944, nine days after the start of the invasion, Jagdgeschwader 103 began training. In an emergency action, the rapid training was completed by June 21st.

Now, however, the squadron demanded that the self-sacrificing men should also be trained in diving at different angles in night flight and a kind of instrument flight.

At this point in time, however, the pilots had to begin bomb-dropping exercises in Rechlin/Lärz. The men were flown from Dedelsdorf to Stolp. However, there "coincidentally" none of the FW 190 machines needed for training were left there, since they had been withdrawn earlier. The flight training therefore had to be completed on ›Arado‹ Ar 96 training machines, which were not comparable for the mission. These weren't all of the 'oddities', because when the men arrived in Rechlin two days later, only one FW 190 was available for their dive drills.

Focke Wulf FW190F-8
self-sacrifice aircraft
of the KG 200
›Leonidas-Staffel‹ (June
1944) with
PD 1400 anti-tank bomb.



Someone was obviously consciously trying to stop the training
To drag out or prevent self-sacrificing men.

Weapons technology also showed inadequacies that could hardly be explained. They had 'forgotten' to equip the bombs with a detonator that could be armed without having to be released beforehand. The pilots had to practice the extremely difficult bomb target throw with the large bomb. The "advantage" of a targeted, manned guidance of the bomb and plane to the target was largely eliminated without the risk for the self-sacrificing pilot during the mission flight becoming correspondingly less.

By June 25, 15 FW 190 F-8s had already been transferred to the KG 200 to Strasbourg-Enzheim for self-sacrifice use. On June 28, the aircraft should be relocated to their base in Creil (north of Paris). The necessary tank bombs had already been stored there under the supervision of Weapons Inspector PLATHOLT since June 20th .

However, it was now perfectly clear that the untrained SO men could not have conducted the planned anti-invasion operation with any prospect of success. As a result, a bitter dispute arose between the squadron command of KG 200 and the original advocates of self-sacrifice, such as Lieutenant LANGE and Hanna REITSCH. In the meantime, the original deployment options had also expired, because by the end of June 1944 the breakthrough through the positions of the Atlantic Wall had long been completed, and the Allied battleships - if they were still on the coast at all - were no longer as decisive for the battle as they were in the first few days the invasion. However, Colonel HEIGL now insisted on letting the SO men start.

It was then Hanna REITSCH who prevented the impending useless use of SO-FW 190 bombs by the untrained pilots. She reported the situation to Reichsführer SS Heinrich HIMMLER, who informed HITLER at the time . HITLER not only banned the use itself, but also every further bomb test flight with the SO machines. Colonel HEIGL, who had initially delayed the SO mission and then poorly prepared it, but still wanted to have it carried out, was "severely reprimanded" by HITLER for this reason.¹

The crews of the Allied battleships and the German self-sacrifice aircraft were saved from the danger of death as a result of these chess moves, some of which are still unclear to this day.

¹ As discussed below, this was not the only oddity in Colonel HEIGL's behavior. He was later dismissed as squadron commander and sent to the Eastern Front in October 1944 as a divisional commander of paratroopers.



Chapter 5

Where are the promised miracle weapons?

The famous Me 262 had a revolutionary engine (the air jet engine). HITLER had promised a lot from its use, which for inexplicable reasons never materialized.

In 1939 HITLER had announced to the Germans that they would be creating new types of weapons that would be crucial to the war. Jet fighters, long-range missiles, rockets or "the wonder weapon" - everything was hoped for or feared when HITLER 's answer to the Allied large-scale attack against "Fortress Europe" came.

Blown up and scrapped.

What happened to the approximately 4000 guided missiles?

The 'remote controlled bodies', commonly referred to as 'FK' for short, were among the most important German inventions and developments of the last war. From the spring of 1943, the FX and HS 293 were ready for use at the front, but the possible timely use of these new weapons was initially forbidden by influential personalities in the Luftwaffe leadership, since they had allegedly (!) not been released by HITLER for reasons of secrecy . The colonel of the fighter pilots Werner BAUMBACH , who was in charge of perfecting the long-distance guided missiles , had repeatedly had to protest against the "ignorance and short-sightedness" of the responsible persons in high offices, only to have to accept repeated refusals and setbacks.¹ This was the case in winter, for example In 1942, some of the valuable FK test aircraft of the He 111 type for the air supply of the Stalingrad fortress were withdrawn and lost there, and no

sooner had the weapons been used at the front than someone 'forgot' to make the factory space available for their production .

1 Werner BAUMBACH,
*Too late? Rise and fall
of the German Air Force,*
Motorbuch, Stuttgart
31977, pp. 139-144

When in the summer of 1943, after a long delay, the first FK were used in combat and achieved almost sensational success under the most difficult operating conditions, the unbelievable happened: high-ranking members of the Luftwaffe failed to report the sinking successes achieved with the new guided missile to the top command . So it was only when it was much too late that Reich Marshal GÖRING had to be persuaded by Colonel BAUMBACH with a film that the Italian battleship Roma had been sunk with FX.

Before the Normandy invasion, however, thousands of FK were deployed capable, and with a 40 percent direct hit success rate in wartime operations despite utter enemy air superiority, they would have posed a grave threat to the ubiquitous Allied ships.

N. M. L. 26-1943

ISSUED BY THE INTELLIGENCE DIVISION
OFFICE OF CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
NAVY DEPARTMENT

INTELLIGENCE REPORT

SC-1272

Serial B-23 Monograph Index Guide No. _____
(Start new series each year; i. e., 1-1, 2-1, etc.)
(To correspond with SUBJECT given below. See O. N. L. Index Guide. Make separate report for each main title.)

From COMNAVEU at LONDON Date 27 April, 1944
(Ship, fleet, unit, district office, station, or person)

Reference _____
(Directives, correspondence, previous related reports, etc., if applicable)

Source British Official Evaluation "A-1"
(As reliable, personal observation, publication, press, cooperation with—
Identify when practicable, etc.) A-1 to E-O also
AS/EN 2-10; SEE 412111-21-12

Subject ATTACK AGAINST LAND TARGETS WITH RADIO-CONTROLLED MISSILES.
(Nation reported on) (Major title as per Index Guide) (Subtitles) (Make separate report for each title)

BRIEF. (Here enter careful summary of report, containing substance succinctly stated; include important facts, names, places, dates, etc.)

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

SUMMARY: According to a study by the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee of the British War Cabinet, there is no great likelihood that the Germans will use radio-controlled missiles against inland targets in the United Kingdom.

DETAILS:

1. Aircraft equipped with the Hs. 293 and FX bombs have been developed by the Germans in the past essentially for use against shipping targets. Germans expecting invasion in the West are more likely to conserve this weapon, therefore, for use against the expedition's shipping and convoys and possibly, though less likely, against shipping targets in coastal waters or in harbors around the United Kingdom.

2. Aircraft using the above-mentioned bombs can operate only efficiently in daylight or bright moonlight. Accordingly, their use against targets in territory protected by well-organized air defenses would be expensive. The enemy will be far more likely to continue to use radio-controlled missiles against harbor targets than against any installations inland. This conclusion, of course, excludes CROSSBOW in any form.

PREPARED BY: Darrell St. Claire
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Intelligence Officer. By direction.

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Routing space below for use in O. N. L.

US warning
against the use
of guided missiles
against the landing
fleet (source Nara).